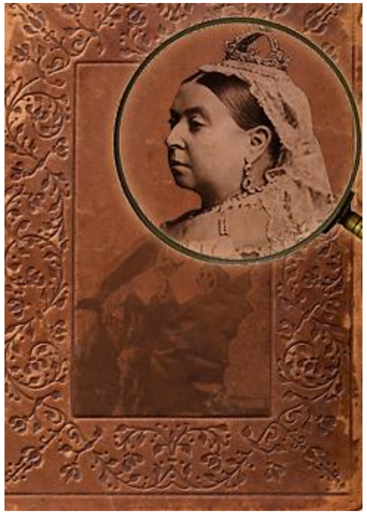
Adrian Radu

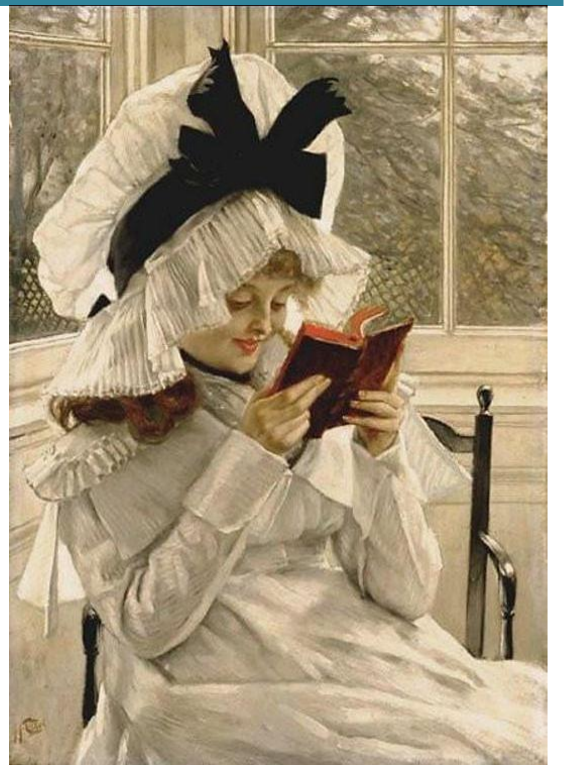
The Palace of Art

An Anthology of Selected Victorian Writing

Parallel Texts



Edited by Lidia Vianu



Contemporary Literature Press

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Press Release

Tuesday 7 April 2015

Adrian Radu

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Parallel Texts.

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Modernism, with James Joyce, T.S Eliot, Ezra Pound, and the peak year of 1922, is the moment in time which shaped the expectations from literature of most 21st Century readers. In its turn, Modernism was born and bred inside Victorianism. The anthology of Victorian literary texts we are now publishing is clear proof of our own connections with the time when, in England, Queen Victoria reigned.

Adrian Radu, Professor at the University Babes-Bolyai in Cluj, has compiled a selection of excerpts which illustrate Victorian literary

Aşteptările de la literatură ale cititorului din secolul XXI s-au format la lumina Modernismului, în anul-cheie 1922, când James Joyce, T.S. Eliot şi Ezra Pound publicau aproape simultan. Modernismul englez, la rândul lui, din Victorianism s-a născut. Antologia de literatură Victoriană pe care o publicăm acum demonstrează cum nu se poate mai limpede că aceia care citesc în ziua de azi au multe în comun cu acea vreme când în Anglia domnea regina Victoria.

Profesor la Univesitatea Babeş-Bolyai din Cluj, Adrian Radu a alcătuit pentru studenții lui de la Departamentul de Engleză o selecție de fragmente prin

conventions. In parallel with Adrian Radu's own explanations, we have added the Romanian version of those excerpts which have been translated in the course of time. Victorian Fiction has been translated into Romanian extensively. Very few dared and managed to translate Victorian verse like genuine craftsmen: Leon Levițchi was the most important of them all.

In publishing this bilingual anthology, we are actually bringing to public notice an important period in the history of English Studies in Romania. The research of Romanian translations was done by graduate students of the MA Programme for the Translation of the Contemporary Literary Text.

Contemporary Literature Press thus continues one of its most important directions: English Studies / Istoria Anglisticii Româneşti.

care a ilustrat convențiile literare victoriene. În paralel cu explicațiile lui la această selecție, editura a adăugat versiunea în limba română a acelor fragmente care au fost traduse la noi de-a lungul timpului. S-a tradus mult în România din proza Victoriană. Prea puțini au îndrăznit, însă, să se apropie de poezie, iar dintre aceştia şi mai puțini au făcut-o cu har şi pricepere la versificație. Cel mai important dintre ei a fost, desigur, Leon Levițchi.

Prin publicarea acestei antologii bilingve, *Contemporary Literature Press* aduce de fapt în atenția cititorilor un moment important din anglistica românească. Cercetarea din domeniul traducerilor în limba română a fost efectuată de studenții Masteratului pentru Traducerea Textului Literar Contemporan. Editura urmează, aşadar, cu acest volum, una dintre direcțiile ei cele mai importante: Istoria Anglisticii Româneşti.

Lidia Vianu

Adrian Radu

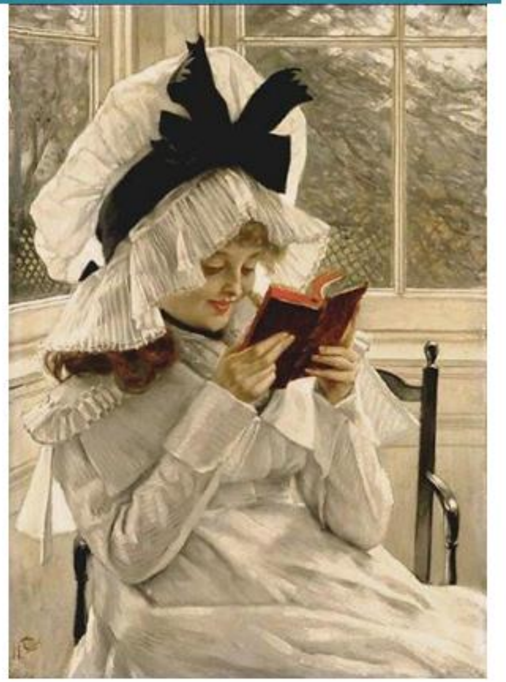
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The Age

The coming of Queen Victoria to the throne of England and her very long rule (1837-1901) made England enjoy one of her most prosperous periods—great industrial advancement, surge of national pride, power and prestige never paralleled before, expansion of the British Empire and an increase in popularity of the institution of monarchy. This golden age represented a turning point in the evolution of English and British society and a re-evaluation of previous values.

Queen Victoria became one of the country's best-loved queens whereas Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, known for his interest in the arts, social and industrial advancement, was an agreeable presence in the stiff atmosphere of the Royal Court and a constantly positive influence on the Queen.

In no other period in the history of mankind had the scientific discoveries changed the customs, the ideas and even the characters as they did in the nineteenth century when the Industrial Revolution had started its sweeping march forward. The result was that man seemed to have become the master of nature. Machines driven by steam took over as a prolongation of man's power while industrial production gradually replaced manual labour. The telegraph diminished the distances between cities and continents and communication became easier and more significant in a country that was to establish itself as an imperial power over a large territory.

The initial result of this economic boom was significant rises in wages and share value. England soon became an industrial and commercial nation, one of the wealthiest, most prosperous and representative in the world. She was in the centre of world trade with one of the biggest fleets and the most accessible and effective coal mines and one of the most prosperous bourgeoisies that knew how to use the new inventions to its advantage. The country was getting richer and richer and London became one of the most important capitals of the world as a result of this industrialisation process.

The highpoint of Victorian Britain was the Great Exhibition opened on 1 May 1851 by Prince Albert in the newly constructed

Crystal Palace, a 'blazing arch of lucid glass' (Matthew 463). It was a good opportunity for the proud achievements of the nation to be displayed for everybody to admire and to celebrate Britain's economic progress, and its place as leader of world market (Delaney et al. 125).

One of the most important social effects of the age was the emergence of the new bourgeoisie and the middle classes as bearers of the standard of living of the epoch. The prevalent spirit was one of Puritanism which resulted in the adoption by the bourgeoisie of high blue-blooded standards of living and conservative snobbishness.

In this period for the first time were the lower and middle classes—the greater part of the common people—given real access to culture. Education was now more widely distributed and the result was that more and more people were able to read and write. Cheap editions—as a consequence of the improved printing techniques—found an unlimited reading public for the works of past and present writers, and the book reviews contributed to the wider diffusion of literature. Lending and circulating libraries appeared and became very popular. As work in factories became more efficient and women were freed of the traditional household chores, like for instance, the making of bread, there was more time for many to read and enjoy literature.

This age saw the creation of the modern newspaper as vehicle of information and of popular education and provider of publishing space for the serial novel. The result was the rise in the circulation figures of periodicals, journals and pamphlets most of them with a literary page as the public grew more and more accustomed to having their newspaper as part of their daily life.

The doctrine of the age was Utilitarianism with its focus upon the pragmatic finality of an act rather than upon its intrinsic nature or the motives of the agent. The result was that the total benefit was maximised at all costs, and such terms as conscience, moral sense, right, love, sensitivity, affections, emotions or feelings no longer had any value. The underlying principle was *laissez-faire* or Liberalism which made private interest in economy or commerce enjoy unrestricted freedom to the detriment of their agents. The main attitude, seen as the main spur in man's behaviour, was that of 'personal egotism' generated by such personal interest.

But the prosperity of the Victorian Age was not to last for ever, especially in the last 25 years of the century. But problems arose starting with the fourth decade of the nineteenth century—the so-called Hungry Forties—when the Industrial Revolution had completely dislocated the traditional structure of English society, bringing riches to a few and misery to quite a lot. In spite of the displayed prosperity, in many cases the living conditions of the working classes—forced to live where factories, roads, canals and

railways allowed them to live (Harvie 446)—often turned to be unimaginably sordid: squalid houses with rooms in which as many as 20 people had to live, with polluted drinking water, bad sanitation and stinking yards filled with filth. London with its slums and East End district, the new industrial cities of the North, such as Liverpool or Manchester, are cases in point. As Chew and Altick mention (1283), the pictures of filthy conditions in Dickens's *Oliver Twist* or *Bleak House* are transcripts from reality and not Romantic or Gothic exaggerations.

The agricultural working class, deprived of subsistence on the land by the enclosures of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, had to toil on other people's land or thronged to the cities of the Midlands and the North where the liberal policy of the government directed towards private interests, forced them to work long hours in almost inhuman conditions for miserable wages, and threw them out of employment altogether as soon as the markets went down.

For people who were unable to support themselves the system of workhouses continued to exist through the age as it had been set up under the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 although many individual houses existed before this legislation. Though writers of the age such as Dickens presented workhouses in bleak colours, these institutions were basically meant to offer relief—shelter, food and work possibilities for deprived people who had exhausted all other possibilities of self-support (Chew and Altick 1282).

The workers' poverty-stricken working and living conditions, but also their lack of political power and representation made them attempt to defend their economic, social and political interests by forming trade unions, a fact bitterly resented by the employers. The representation of the working class struggle was channelled by the Chartist Movement whose requests were embodied in the *People's Charter* published in May 1938, i.e. adult male suffrage, vote by ballot, annual Parliaments, payment of members of Parliament, equal electoral distribution based on equal electoral districts and abolition of property qualification (Harvey 442-3). The rejection of a petition with millions of signatures to the Parliament in 1839—petition repeated in 1848—was followed by a series of industrial strikes, demonstrations and repressive measures by the Government. All these events led to the belief that Chartism would bring revolution and terror to England. Therefore, any working-class militancy was perceived as threat to social order.

British industry was threatened by the competition of the younger nations and the export trade ceased to grow. The overall

economic activity of the country showed a decline. Unemployment and poverty were on the increase, strikes, as a result, grew more numerous; a chronic feeling of unrest set in and socialism, which since 1850 had practically disappeared, once again was seen as an active force. Happy expectations and easy victories were past and gone. This feeling of anxiety was widespread in the atmosphere of the century drawing to its end.

The Frame of Mind

The Victorian frame of mind was dominated by three basic formative agents. The first is directly linked with the Industrial Revolution with its unprecedented economic development of England but also with massive displacements of population from the rural areas to the new industrial cities which soon became overcrowded, associated with unemployment, housing problems and pollution of the environment. The Industrial Revolution went in parallel with an unequalled development of sciences, which led to the belief that sciences could solve all problems and everything could be scientifically explained. The second influence comes from the doctrine of Utilitarianism, previously mentioned. The third influence is the direct result of the Darwinian theory about the origin of man and evolution exposed in his book *On The Origin of Species*, a theory which, as Matthew underlines (467), laid stress on the idea of evolution as determined by the laws of science. When this theory was corroborated with the extreme belief in the power of sciences, all biblical theories were shattered as people were led to think that the laws governing human evolution were just as precise as those of the material world. The result was a serious spiritual crisis which went directly to the fundament of religion and its sacred canons.

One of the trends of the age was to associate art with morality which implied that the artists in their process to communicate with their public had to make their message socially and morally significant (Buckley 11). This implies that a 'moral aesthetic' was expected in every creation. For Ruskin the best of art was that associated with the moral idea, poets had to amuse but also offer

instruction, novelists had to entertain and educate at the same time. It is therefore not surprising that the aesthetic movement at the end of the century rose its voice against such postulates to proclaim that art should never be indebted to morality but only to itself.

This age is also one in which women became aware of their position and status in society and started claiming equal rights with men. But the process of their emancipation was only in an incipient phase and feminism as movement was something that had not been invented yet. What women did was that they became aware of their status of marginalization and, as a consequence, tried to move to the centre by imitating the male culture, by attempting to equal the males' intellectual achievements or, respectively, by asserting their identities and criticising the male standards, values and norms. This is mainly the case of Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Gaskell or George Eliot.

The Victorian spirit goes along two essential directions or streams of thought—discussed in the section below—to which two groups of writers were associated. Very often within the same group of writers and occasionally in one and the same author, rational criticism was associated with an attitude of rebellion against the excess of scientific dogmatism or social pressure. Coercive doctrines that subordinated the individual to society or to the Empire and their norms found themselves in contact with attitudes that recognised no measure, no reason and no law but their own.

The Literature of the Age

At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, Romanticism as trend of expression had exhausted much of its forces and writers now turned to other sources of inspiration. The new age was an age of order and reason opposed to emotions, dreams and tumults of the soul, which called for discipline, reason and balance in all things. The literary phase which was about to begin would return to what Romanticism had previously rebelled against—neoclassicism. Now the coordinates of creation were given by the desire for truth and realism of representation.

Therefore, English literature, in the first half of the Victorian era, was deeply moulded by the authority of reason which had grown more exacting and active, and which found its direct and main outlet in science.

But this period of rationality and confidence was not to last long. When in the third quarter of the nineteenth century the equilibrium of the nation and society in which everybody believed was submitted to various shocks, its place was taken by a feeling of instability. The Victorian spirit lost its self-confidence and the order, discipline and reason were replaced with restlessness, divergence and need for renovation. If, before, England had felt proudly isolated and, as such, quite refractory to external influences, now the English temperament became more open to foreign intellectual movements and welcomed more readily influences from abroad.

What had previously constituted subjects of inspiration was no longer satisfactory or acceptable and the reign of the machine and its kingdom of iron, stone and ugliness had to cease their existence and their representation had to turn to something else.

Previously, feeling had to submit to various sets of rules mostly dictated by science, but now the philosophy and the literature of the declining century were filled with an impassioned revolt against science. The Victorian strict discipline in social life and morals was more and more relaxed, and, as a consequence, the repressed instincts were let loose again beyond any rule of repression, while the senses claimed their freedom. A new spirit of restlessness, anarchy and adventurous experiment was on its way to replace the decorous wisdom of Victorian compromise in all things.

The mind no longer wanted to follow the narrow roads of logic and the rights of intuition were proclaimed, mysticism was revived in all its forms. Imagination was being emancipated at the same time, the unknown, the beyond were again explored. The feeling of the mysterious side of things was no longer repressed, on the contrary, it was deliberately sought. The age was ripe for a kind of Romanticism reloaded.

Victorian literature has been placed by many at the crossroads between tradition and modernity, between conservatism and innovation, bearing the mark of the tension, 'between enclosure within tradition, post-Romantic exuberance and pre-modernist innovation' (Bradford 134). In this context, the two directions mentioned above enhanced this tension and shaped up the culture and the literature of the age—non-fictional or fictional, in verse or in prose.

Victorian Non-Fiction

The Victorian age is a prolific age in writings in the field of economics, science, philosophy, politics and religion in which their authors tried to find meaning in the shaken certitudes and confusing changes of their time. Some of such writings were very influential and shaped the public's frame of mind.

Victorian non-fiction moved between two poles represented to a certain degree by Thomas Carlyle's transcendentalism and authoritarianism of Romantic legacy and John Stuart Mill's rationalism and democracy of eighteenth century inheritance.

Thomas Carlyle attacked the failures of the Victorian industrial society, basically its materialistic spirit and was very much against the Utilitarian doctrine. In this context he developed his theory about leadership and the rule of strong personalities in ensuring the correct governance of the society.

John Stuart Mill also found this theory inadequate and tried to demonstrate in his book *Utilitarianism* (1863) that laws should be made in such a way so as to allow men to develop their natural talent and personalities. He comprehended the fact that science and the whole universe are based on facts, but he also recognized that this world of facts has to be reconciled with that of the senses, accepting what the philosopher George Berkeley had argued before, that matter is 'a permanent possibility of sensation' (Legouis

and Cazamian 1100). For him, human feelings, such as happiness, pleasure or pain are relative and often display differences of quality and depend upon the state of a person's soul and cannot be, as such, quantified. In so far as the science of social life is concerned, he asserted that the liberty of the individual cannot be a self-sufficient principle but must exist within the limits imposed by social life (Legouis and Cazamian 1101). Nonetheless, this vision is to a certain extent contrary to what he declares in *On Liberty* (1859), where his belief is that a society's public opinion or its ruler or its government cannot obstruct the individual's right or liberty. Liberty is also the theme of his work *The Subjection of Women* (1869), where he advocates perfect liberty between men and women considering that the oppression of women has to be suppressed as one of the few remaining relics from ancient times.

John Ruskin was another influential figure of the age with his basic concept that art should be associated with morality and his thesis that contemporary society was incapable of creating great art. He found England ugly and dehumanised and tried to teach his contemporaries what being beautiful really meant and that good art played an important role in society as it contributed to the spiritual well-being of man.

Another important representative of non-fictional prose was Matthew Arnold who also wrote against the lack of moral value in Victorian England and the importance of education in retrieving the lost moral standards of the age. His writings also cover the field of literary criticism which he constantly associated with a moral purpose.

Towards the end of the century as the age progressed towards its spiritual crisis, the doctrine of aestheticism became more and more influential. This movement, whose primary theorist was Walter Pater, began as another reaction to the prevailing Utilitarian social philosophies and the idea that art should be moral in the first place, serving political, social or religious purposes. It adopted the principle of 'art for art' sake, postulated hedonism and asserted the autonomy of aesthetic standards from morality, utility, or pleasure.

Besides social and philosophical writings, Victorian non-fiction is also dominated by certain important scientific writings, the most authoritative and influential being Charles Darwin who, in his *On the Origin of Species,* developed his theory about evolution, natural selection and survival of the fittest. This book created an enormous scandal and a lot of controversy and shattered the fundamental religious beliefs of the Victorian age as it questioned the very existence and role of God in the process of life and evolution.

Victorian Poetry

If the Romantic age was the age of poetry—the age of Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley or Keats—the Victorian epoch was the epoch of the novel, par excellence, a literary genre which, being more accessible, best suited the rising middle classes and their need for entertainment and education. The novel developed to the detriment of poetry which was marginalised and reduced to the status of entertainment and was considered only as an instrument of pleasure. The effect of poetry was, as Galea points out (34), to subvert rational judgement basically associated with the novel and form thus opinions using the art of persuasion.

Poetry in the Victorian age was characterised by an inward movement; it often found a way of itself and became a select or elitist genre for educated readers with cultivated knowledge (the example of Browning is illustrative in this respect), unlike the novel which was more mass-oriented, a genre more easily affordable and accessible, more on everyone's hand.

Victorian poetry goes along three main streams of thought or directions placed outside any form of antagonism or priority. The first direction tends to continue the Romantic movement but on new coordinates, the second identifies itself with the contemporary movement in the intellectual and critical thought, stressing the need for objectivity, and aiming at a standard of balance, while the third direction, a kind of re-emergence of the first, seems to favour the idealistic reaction, with its desire for emotion, its cult of beauty and its dreamy tendency, weaving the main themes of vision round the subtle blending of imagination and sensibility. However, seen in the context of the age, the poets of the second group occupy a position of slight precedence in relation to those of the first and third.

As previously pointed out, the Romantic movement continued its existence in the Victorian period but with less force and new dimensions as it got adapted to the requirements of the age. There is an element of Romanticism in all the Victorian poets but the new features are more balanced, the forms are more exact, the content more disciplined, and a stringent intellectualism tends to govern imagination. If there is any sympathy with emotions, the Romantic obsession of the self has gradually disappeared, and man's

feelings, passions, pleasures or sensuality are dealt with in a more refined and elaborate manner.

The properly Romantic inspiration appears now in mixed forms, and combines with other psychological elements which characterise the new period. The most remarkable representative of the first and more subjective stream of thought is Alfred Tennyson, considered as a continuator of the Keatsian and Wordsworthian tradition, to whose poetry the more imaginative one—that of the third group of the Pre-Raphaelites and of other poets of the late Victorian period—is to be added: Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Christina Rossetti, Morris, Swinburne, Meredith.

The poets of the second stream of thought are under the influence of the new scientific discoveries, they are preoccupied with the restless activity of the mind, mere truth, philosophy and psychology appeal to them. Their poems are analyses, demonstrations, where science with its method has shown the way—the poets' ideas seem to be more objective. Robert Browning with his more cerebral poetry may be considered to be at the centre of this more objective, restrained and balanced group of poets. Nonetheless, such classifications are often arbitrary and often writers cannot be judged and studied according to rigid orders and categories.

The Industrial Revolution and mechanised Victorian England, with its ugly and often sordid buildings and towns, with its polluted scenery, with its robotic minds, materialist individuals, with people working more and thinking less could not be considered as sources of inspiration for Victorian poets. Dissatisfied with what they saw around them, feeling alienated and isolated, they tried instead to find acceptable substitutes in an obvious tendency to escape from reality. As Macsiniuc points out (33-6), such replacements were found in dream-like worlds (Dante Gabriel Rossetti or Swinburne), in ancient mythic Greece (Tennyson, Arnold or Swinburne) or Iceland (Morris), in the past of Middle Ages (Tennyson or the Pre-Raphaelites) or of the Renaissance (Robert Browning). Nature, pure and unaffected by man's destructive hand often offered refuge and comfort to such poets as Tennyson or Arnold, and contributed to the creation of a pensive and melancholic atmosphere in elegiac poems.

The poetry of the age, in spite of its sometimes deviating drifts was not shattered by inner convulsions; it had no ideology of its own and produced no doctrines or programmatic documents. Pre-Raphaelitism was only a tendency, a movement that gave poetic voice to the divergences of the age as it tried to drift away from its mechanicism and ugliness but, since it was not very well defined or oriented, it soon lost pace and disappeared. The aestheticism of the *fin de siècle* present in the poems of Swinburne and the versification revolution in the case of Hopkins appeared late in the Victorian age and manifested themselves more plenary in the

twentieth century.

Victorian poetry cultivated traditional forms and metrics; however, special mention should be made of the dramatic monologue, largely considered a Victorian invention, that developed now considerably in the creative hands of Tennyson and Browning. The dramatic monologue combines best the characteristics of poetry that reveals feelings or workings of the mind especially in moments of crisis but in the more realist shape of overheard confession or meditation.

In spite of the relegation of poetry out of the literary mainstream and its growing in the shadow of the novel, the importance of Victorian poetry should not be overlooked or minimised as, unfortunately, it has often happened. Victorian poetry is so rich and full of meanings often expressed in an indirect way, between the lines, or in a hushed voice that it fully deserves to be restored to its full and true dimensions.

The Pre-Raphaelite Movement

The Pre-Raphaelite Movement—as found and developed in Bowra (248-9)—was initially a mid-nineteenth century movement of revolt against artificial art and convention of representation that was imposed by the Royal Academy. But soon it widened its scope and turned out into a movement of avant-garde in painting with reverberations in poetry in its attempt to rejuvenate it both in content and form, such as in its themes, means of expression or versification techniques.

The movement started when in 1850 a group of artists that were to call themselves the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood felt that that their spiritual needs could not be satisfied by the grave sentiment of post-Romantic and neo-classical poetry found in Tennyson or Arnold, or the realism and didacticism of Browning's creation. The result was that they tried to replace what Victorian reality offered them with imaginary worlds chiefly situated in the past. The guiding lines of the movement were published in the group's ephemeral journal *The Germ: Thoughts towards Nature in Poetry, Literature and Art* (January—April 1850).

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was originally a painters' movement founded in 1848 by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Holman

Hunt, John Everett Millais, William Michael Rossetti and others, that turned against the eighteenth century academicism and conventionalism, against the unimaginative and artificial historical painting of the Royal Academy that still prevailed in official circles and against which Blake, Turner and Constable had risen.

In poetry the Pre-Raphaelites rebelled against the mechanicism and the scientific spirit of the age. What they were offered were objects that seemed common, ludicrous and vulgar, and therefore, these artists, convinced as Ruskin was, of the ugliness of the Victorian surface, turned away from industrialized Britain to look for the beauty of the past, in most cases medieval past, and the lure of the remote and the unfamiliar.

The movement believed in simplicity and accurateness of detail, in freshness, directness and precision and hoped to find them in religion and medieval art, namely, in the Italian painting before High Renaissance, before the time of Raphael—hence the name given to the movement—a time when objects had sooner symbolic and sacramental meanings. Consequently, the characters and situations were given the kind of symbolic reality that they had to medieval minds. But medieval was only the sincerity of spirit and the directness of expression, otherwise the Pre-Raphaelite productions were entirely modern in content and form.

The Pre-Raphaelites continued in reduced circumstances the work of the great Romantics whose conscious inheritors they actually were or claimed to be. Consequently, Pre-Raphaelitism may be considered a sort of Romanticism revisited and transferred to new coordinates. It is related with the later literary tendency of the age associated with feelings of restlessness, divergence and the need for renovation, as previously discussed. Through one of its late representatives, Algernon Charles Swinburne it marked the passage to the movement of Aestheticism and decadence at the end of the nineteenth century, discussed below.

The movement did not have a long life—it was started in 1948 and by 1951 it had ceased to exist. Though it was an influential movement, it not develop extensively. As Evans remarks (128), it was rather a sort of 'romanticism working itself out technically and spiritually' which produced no great successor though, at its time, it was associated with great names such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Morris. If it had not been for the merits of D. G. Rossetti—a painter and poet himself—the movement probably would not have been more than an English painters' movement and would not have entered the history of English poetry.

Aestheticism and decadence

Aestheticism or the Aesthetic Movement manifested itself in Europe in the late nineteenth century and centred on the doctrine that art exists for the sake of its beauty alone (i.e. 'art for art's sake'). This movement, which had strong echoes in Britain too, began as a reaction against prevailing Utilitarian social philosophies and what was perceived as the ugliness and philistinism of the industrial age with its doctrine that art should be moral in the first place serving political, social or religious purposes.

The seeds of aestheticism are found in England in the works of the artists of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood through the cultivation of sensuousness. Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Algernon Charles Swinburne expressed a yearning for ideal beauty through conscious mediaevalism and situation of sensations often outside of and above morals (Legouis and Cazamian 1272). They had manifested a tendency for withdrawal from surrounding reality and aspired towards sensuousness and pure poetry. Their creation very often achieves musical effects rather than sense.

This movement advocated the freedom of art and the fact that the artist should be allowed to express itself freely without any moral or ethical constraints paying attention only to the form or the technique employed in his work. In literature the result were creations where feelings and sensations were represented with great frankness, which often offended contemporary readers. Art meant withdrawal from life, art was above life, instead of life or an alternative to life. The underlying meaning of the motto, 'art for art's sake', went soon beyond the limits of artistic creation and was transposed into actual life where sensations were thought to be predominant is life was to be lived in full (as was the case of Oscar Wilde).

The initiator, leader and theorist of the English Aesthetic Movement was Walter Pater with his influential *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), whereas the writer who best rendered this tendency in his work is Oscar Wilde in his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891). The attitudes of the Aesthetic Movement were also represented in the paintings of James McNeill Whistler whose activity raised the movement's ideal of the cultivation of refined sensibility to perhaps its highest point.

The Victorian Novel

The nineteenth century was the age of the novel and the Victorian epoch brought about an unprecedented flourishing of it. This was due to several reasons, many of them pointed out in Flint (17-34). The Industrial Revolution led to the development of cities with concentrated markets; middle-classes rose in power and importance and the novel was the literary genre that best represented these classes; more and more people became educated and capable of reading; the costs of printing and distribution became lower due to productivity; the new system of advertising and promotion of books yielded good results. Then, public reading increased and the number of lending libraries grew in parallel with the modernisation and development of book publishing in the modern sense of the word.

The public merely wished to be entertained with what was familiar, to pretend that what was found in books did really happen, that literature was journalism and fiction was history. In consequence, the literary trend that such expectations generated was (critical) realism, seen as representation of truth—social, economic or individual—of the typical and familiar in real life, rather than an idealised, formalised or romantic interpretation of it. The readers wanted to read about easily identifiable situations with ordinary people like themselves but liberated from the dullness of daily routine.

Great writers like Charles Dickens, Charlotte Brontë or Elizabeth Gaskell felt the necessity to undertake rigorous documentation before starting to write their novels. Such necessity to represent truth with as much accuracy as possible was due to the socio-economic conditions of the epoch, but also to the development of sciences whose influence was ever increasing. Even in the cases when they fictionalised reality, such writers knew how to create the illusion that what they spoke about was directly related to real life, that their books were a transcript of what really happened.

The best Victorian novels managed to transcend the petty requirements of their contemporary readership and be thus associated with larger audiences situated on different temporary levels and with different horizons of expectation.

Very many novels were published initially in part-issue form and later in weekly papers in the form of serial publication. This became common practice with many great novelists such as Charles Dickens, W. M. Thackeray or George Eliot. The method of

serialization affected the structure of the novel and had advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand it enhanced the role of the suspense from one episode to another to keep the readers' interest awake—the so-called 'cliff-hanger' technique commonly used in TV serials today (Delaney et co. 130), closer contact between writer and his readership, which enabled the writer to test the readers' reaction to the narrated events. On the other hand, there were incongruities, inconsistencies in character treatment or damages to the unity and harmony of the whole novel.

The Victorian novel is essentially based on the chronological presentation of events where the hero emerges with the plot and the readers know him as the story unfolds or in which the writer gives his hero an initial descriptive portrait. The novel often makes the writer feel the necessity to teach a moral lesson, to improve the morals and manners of his readers, to make generalisations about human nature, or even to discuss the hero's actions with the readers in an attempt to please them or to attend to their desires (Flint 24)—as it happens in the case of W. M. Thackeray.

If before many novels finished with happy-endings, this ceased to be common practice throughout the nineteenth century (Flint 29) and even if there was a happy-ending, it was often contrived or suggested (as in Dickens's *Great Expectations*).

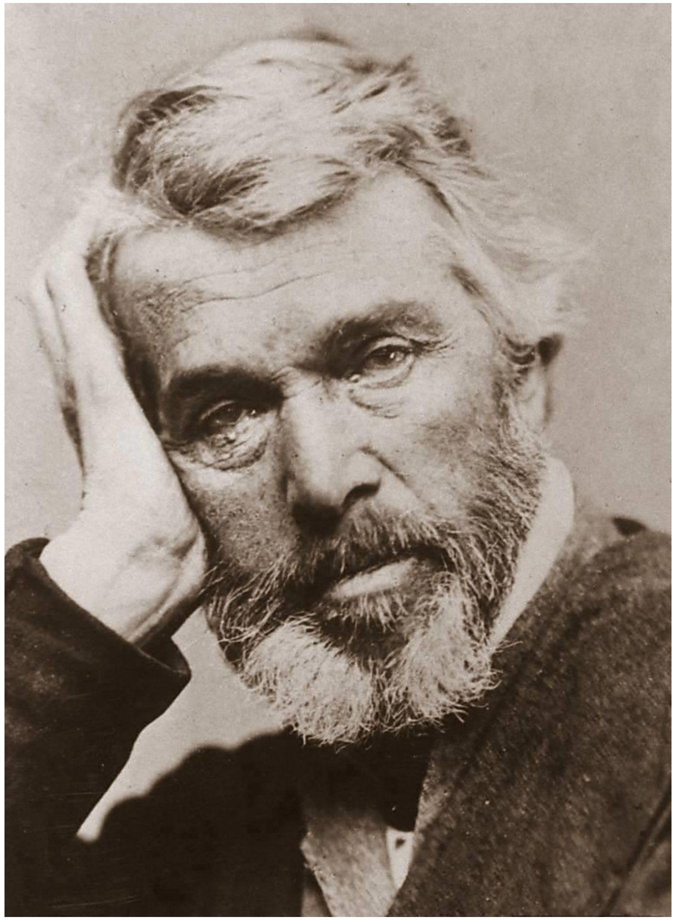
The narrative technique is also traditional, the most frequently used being the third person narration with the writer emerging as an omniscient author—this is the case of W. M. Thackeray, Charlotte Brontë (in *Shirley*) or George Eliot. Another perspective is that offered by the first person narration. In Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* it has pseudo-autobiographical overtones. Anne Brontë's novel *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is a more complex combination of two first person narrations. An interesting case is found in *Bleak House* by Ch. Dickens where the subjective narration in the 1st person of a participant in the story is made to alternate with the more objective third person narration of a nameless onlooker and outsider. Innovative for the age is Emily Brontë's use of narrators in *Wuthering Heights*, where the two narrators—actually, character narrators—have a minor implication in the story being mainly used to narrate the events.

The novelists of the Victorian age are not grouped around theoretical principles. In general, their creations deal with social, political and philosophical topics. However, there are two quite distinctive generations of writers that cover this period. The first one is represented by such writers as Charles Dickens, W. M. Thackeray, Elizabeth Gaskell, Anthony Trollope, the Brontës and George Eliot, who were very popular at that time. They are a sort of spokespersons of the epoch, critical of the age but confident in sciences

and progress and moral improvement of the individual. The second generation—represented by Samuel Butler, George Meredith and Thomas Hardy, who were less popular then—is more pessimistic and less confident in Victorian values, hence certain satirical overtones and insistence on the inner and darker sides of human personality.

Thomas Carlyle

(1795-1881)



Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) was born in Dumfriesshire in Scotland and educated at the local parish school to become a minister. At the age of 15 he entered Edinburgh University. He directed his studies towards German literature, the result of which was *The Life of Schiller* which appeared in *The London Magazine*. His interest in German letters made him correspond with Goethe and write several essays on German literature. He composed *Sartor Resartus* (which he published initially in *Fraser's Magazine* and in book form in 1838) while the first part of *The French Revolution*, incidentally destroyed in a fire while in manuscript, had to be rewritten and the work finally appeared in 1837. In the same and the following year he gave a series of public lectures. These were collected in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841). In his *Chartism* (1839) and *Past and Present* (1843) he turned his attention to the political problems of the day. The present and future of Labour, Salvation, according to him was to be sought in a return to medieval conditions and the rule of the strong man, who was not to be got by popular election. The same views are found in *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850). Carlyle's second great work, *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, was published in 1845 and the *Life of John Sterling* in 1851. He spent 14 years in preparation of his *History of Friedrich of Prussia, called Frederick the Great* (published between 1858-1865). This enormous work exhausted the energy of the author and the result must be called, unfortunately, a failure. The method which worked in the case of *The French Revolution* and *Heroes* is ill-starred here; the author uses too vast a canvas which he overloads with events and overwhelming results.

After the death of his wife in 1866 he wrote little of importance. He died in 1881 as a very lonely man tormented by spells of melancholy and depression.

Carlyle was an original mind who managed to mingle creatively Romance with philosophy, German transcendentalist thinking with doctrines of empiricism and Utilitarianism. He adopted the Romantic idea of the genius and developed his theory about leadership and strong personalities as possible solution to the ruinous effects of *laissez-faire* economics and Utilitarian ethics.

From *The French Revolution*

The French Revolution (1837) is an account of the events of 1789–1799 in France, a period of political and social turmoil during which the French political regime, an absolute monarchy with feudal privileges, was violently overthrown and replaced with forms based on Enlightenment principles of democracy, citizenship, and inalienable rights. Carlyle's book is an unusual history book—an epic in prose, a modern docudrama 'reverberating with the thunder of stormy events' (Sampson 574). Carlyle's narrative is full of dynamism, it is a cinematic technique (Turner 187) of re-creating the past, giving it new life and describing it with an impressionistic vividness. The result is that the readers are projected into the midst of the events and made to watch everything directly and dramatically.

The book is about events in France, but Carlyle obviously wrote it for English readers: if the authorities' concern for public good in England is not restored, if they do not start to act responsibly, an English Revolution like the French one would be most likely to happen (Turner 186).

The two passages inserted below demonstrate the unprecedented manner of Carlyle's narrative.

Poor Abbé Siccard

The episode narrates the September 1792 dramatic events in Paris, when the revolutionary party under Georges-Jacques Danton and Jean-Paul Marat had to take desperate measures to defend Paris from the invading armies of Austria and Prussia. At the same time, there were fears that a counter-revolution might be triggered by the events, which led to the so-called September massacres, in which 1,400 political prisoners were killed in four days.

The tocsin is pealing its loudest, the clocks inaudibly striking *Three* when poor *Abbé Sicard[1], with some thirty other *Nonjurant Priests, in six carriages, fare along the streets, from the preliminary House of Detention at the Townhall, westward towards the Prison of the Abbaye. Carriages enough stand deserted on the streets; these six move on, through angry multitudes, cursing as they move. Accursed Aristocrat *Tartuffes, this is the pass ye have brought us to! And now ye will break the Prisons and set *Capet Veto on horseback to ride over us? Out upon you, Priests of *Beelzebub and *Moloch; of Tartuffery, Mammon and the Prussian Gallows—which ye name Mother-Church and God!—Such reproaches have the poor Nonjurants to endure, and worse; spoken in on them by frantic Patriots, who mount even on the carriage-steps; the very guards hardly refraining. Pull up your carriage-blinds?—No! answers Patriotism, clapping its horny paw on the carriage-blind, and crushing it down again. Patience in oppression had limits: we are close to the Abbaye, it has lasted long: a poor Nonjurant, of quicker temper smiles the horny paw with its cane; nay finding *solacement in it, *smites the unkempt head, sharply and again more sharply twice over,—seen clearly of us and of the world. It is the last that we see clearly. Alas, next moment the carriages are locked and blocked in endless raging tumults; in yells deaf to the cry for mercy, which answer the cry for mercy with sabre-thrusts through the heart. The thirty Priests are torn out, massacred about the Prison-Gate one after one,—only the poor Abbé Sicard, whom one Moton, a watchmaker, knowing him, heroically tried to save and secrete in the Prison, escapes to tell;—and it is Night and *Orcus, and Murder's snaky-sparkling head *has* risen in the murk!—

(in *The French Revolution* 1: 105)

[1] The words preceded by an asterisk are explained in the section **Glossary and Notes**.

Marie Antoinette

The fragment below is another dramatic episode of the Revolution – it records the last moments of Marie Antoinette, the wife and queen of Louis XVI, the king of France who was in power when the Revolution broke out. She strongly opposed any reform during the Revolution, which contributed to the overthrow of the French monarchy and led to her execution by guillotine on 16 October 1793. Here the voice of the writer is sympathetic and speaks words of encouragement to the former queen as she passes to meet her fate.

Look there! the bloom of that fair face is wasted, the hair is grey with care; the brightness of those eyes is *quenched, their lids hang *drooping; the face is stony pale, as of one living in death. Mean weeds, which her own hands has mended, attire the Queen of the World. The death-*hurdle where thou sittest pale, motionless, which only curses *environ, has to stop; a people, drunk with vengeance, will drink it again in full draught, looking at thee. Far as the eye reaches, a multitudinous sea of maniac heads, the air deaf with their triumph-yell! The living-dead must shudder with yet one other pang; her startled blood yet again *suffuses with the hue of agony that pale face, which she hides with her hands. There is there *no* heart to say, God pity thee! O think not of these; think of HIM whom thou *worshippest, the crucified—who, alas, treading the wine-press *alone*, fronted sorrow still deeper; and triumphed over it and made it holy, and built of it a 'sanctuary of sorrow' for thee and all the wretched! Thy path of thorns is *nigh ended, one long last look at the *Tuileries, where thy step was once so light—where thy children shall not dwell. The head is on the rock; the axe rushes—dumb lies the world; that wild-yelling world, and all its madness, is behind thee.

(in *The French Revolution* 2: 287-8)

From *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*

Carlyle's work, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841) reveals his conception about leadership and the role of the strong personality. It reflects his trust in the individual hero and the association of this hero with the divinely appointed Messiah (Chew and Altick 1316) whose mission is to provide salvation from the existing evils of Victorian liberalism, Utilitarianism and the materialism of the economic doctrine of *laissez-faire*. The book is constructed as a series of essays, originally delivered as lectures—hence their colloquial style—round the concept of the mutable hero seen as divinity (in pagan myths), as prophet (Muhammad), as poet (Dante and Shakespeare), as priest (Luther and Knox), as man of letters (Johnson, Rousseau and Burns), and as king (Cromwell and Napoleon).

On Shakespeare

Carlyle contemplates in Chapter III, entitled 'The Hero as Poet. Dante: Shakspeare' [sic], from which the following fragment is extracted, the impressive magnificence of William Shakespeare, (which Carlyle spells 'Shakspeare') surnamed the Warwickshire Peasant and perceived as the 'sun', the 'upper light of the world'. For Carlyle Shakespeare is the chief of all poets, 'the greatest of the intellects' who constructed what is called 'deliberate illumination of the whole matter.' This devotion to the bard of Stratford has been associated with one of the first instances of bardolatry.

Well: this is our poor Warwickshire Peasant, who rose to be Manager of a *Playhouse, so that he could live without begging; whom the *Earl of Southampton cast some kind glances on;

Bine: acesta este bietul nostru Țăran din Warwickshire, care a ajuns să fie Director de Teatru, așa încât să poată trăi fără a cerși; căruia Contele de Southampton i-a aruncat o privire

whom Sir *Thomas Lucy, many thanks to him, was for sending to the *Treadmill! We did not account him a god, like *Odin, while he dwelt with us;—on which point there were much to be said. But I will say rather, or repeat: In spite of the sad state Hero-worship now lies in, consider what this Shakspeare has actually become among us. Which Englishman we ever made, in this land of ours, which million of Englishmen, would we not give up rather than the Stratford Peasant? There is no regiment of highest Dignitaries that we would sell him for. He is the grandest thing we have yet done. For our honour among foreign nations, as an ornament to our English Household, what item is there that we would not surrender rather than him? Consider now, if they asked us, Will you give up your *Indian Empire or your Shakspeare, you English; never have had any Indian Empire, or never have had any Shakspeare? Really it were a grave question. Official persons would answer doubtless in official language; but we, for our part too, should not we be forced to answer: Indian Empire, or no Indian Empire; we cannot do without Shakspeare! Indian Empire will go, at any rate, some day; but this Shakspeare does not go, he lasts forever with us; we cannot give up our Shakspeare!

(in *On Heroes and Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, 'IIIrd Lecture')

binevoitoare; pe care Sir Thomas Lucy, multe mulțumiri lui, vrea să-l trimită la pușcărie! Noi nu l-am socotit drept un zeu, ca pe Odin, pe când trăia cu noi;—dar asupra acestui punct ar fi mult de spus. Dar mai bine aș spune sau aș repeta: Cu toată starea tristă în care se află acum Cultul Eroilor, priviți ce a ajuns acest Shakespeare printre noi. Pe ce Englez din țara noastră, ce milion de Englezi, nu am da noi mai curând decât pe acest țăran din Stratford? Nu l-am vinde pe niciun regiment de cei mai înalți Demnitari. El este cel mai mare lucru pe care l-am făcut până acum. Pentru cinstea noastră printre națiunile străine, ca podoabă a Familiei noastre Engleze, ce alt articol nu am voi să-l predăm înaintea lui? Socotiți acum dacă ne-ar întreba cineva: Voiți să lăsați Imperiul vostru Indian, sau pe Shakespeare al vostru, voi Englezilor; să nu fi avut parte deloc de Shakespeare? Într-adevăr, ar fi o gravă întrebare. Personagii oficiale ar răspunde fără îndoială în limbagiu oficial; dar noi, din partea noastră, am fi siliți să răspundem: Cu Imperiu Indian, sau fără Imperiu Indian, noi nu putem fără Shakespeare! Imperiul Indian se va duce desigur, odată şi odată; dar Shakespeare nu se duce, rămâne pururea cu noi; nu putem să-l dăm pe Shakespeare al nostru!

[Traducere de C. Antoniade, Institutul de Arte Grafice „Răsăritul", București, 1925]

From *Past and Present*

This work is Carlyle's response to the poverty crisis in the Hungry Forties, a period when the high rate of unemployment among industrial workers as well as the appalling conditions of life of the poor led to public violence. The Utilitarianism, materialism and chaos of the nineteenth century is set in contrast with the wise and strong rule of a medieval abbot and a monastic community, with Carlyle in favour of the latter.

The Condition of England

*The two extracts below illustrate Carlyle's sombre vision of England during the Industrial Revolution. England has become a wealthy nation with innumerable poor who are happy to be sent to *workhouses (named 'poor-law prisons') because here they might get something to eat. What is the use of wealth, is Carlyle's rhetorical question, if it is unequally distributed and its result is but misery and unhappiness?*

[1] The condition of England, on which many pamphlets are now in the course of publication, and many thoughts unpublished are going on in every reflective head, is justly regarded as one of the most ominous, and *withal one of the strangest, ever seen in this world. England is full of wealth, of multifarious produce, supply for human want in every kind; yet England is dying of inanition. With *unabated *bounty the land of England blooms and grows; waving with yellow harvests; thick-studded with workshops, industrial implements, with fifteen millions of workers, understood to be the strongest, the cunningest and the willingest our Earth ever had; these men are here; the work they have done, the fruit they have realised is here, abundant, exuberant on every hand of. […]

Of these successful skilful workers some two millions, it is now counted, sit in Workhouses, Poor-law Prisons; or have

'out-door relief' flung over the wall to them,—the workhouse *Bastille being filled to bursting, and the strong Poor-law broken asunder by a stronger. They sit there, these many months now; their hope of deliverance as yet small. In workhouses, pleasantly so named, because work cannot be done in them. Twelve hundred thousand workers in England alone; their cunning right-hand lamed, lying idle in their sorrowful bosom; their hopes, outlooks, share of this fair world, shut in by narrow walls. They sit there, *pent up, as in a kind of horrid enchantment; glad to be imprisoned and enchanted, that they may not perish starved.

(in *The Longman Anthology of British Literature* 2: 1125-6, henceforward cited as *Longman Anthology* with page numbers).

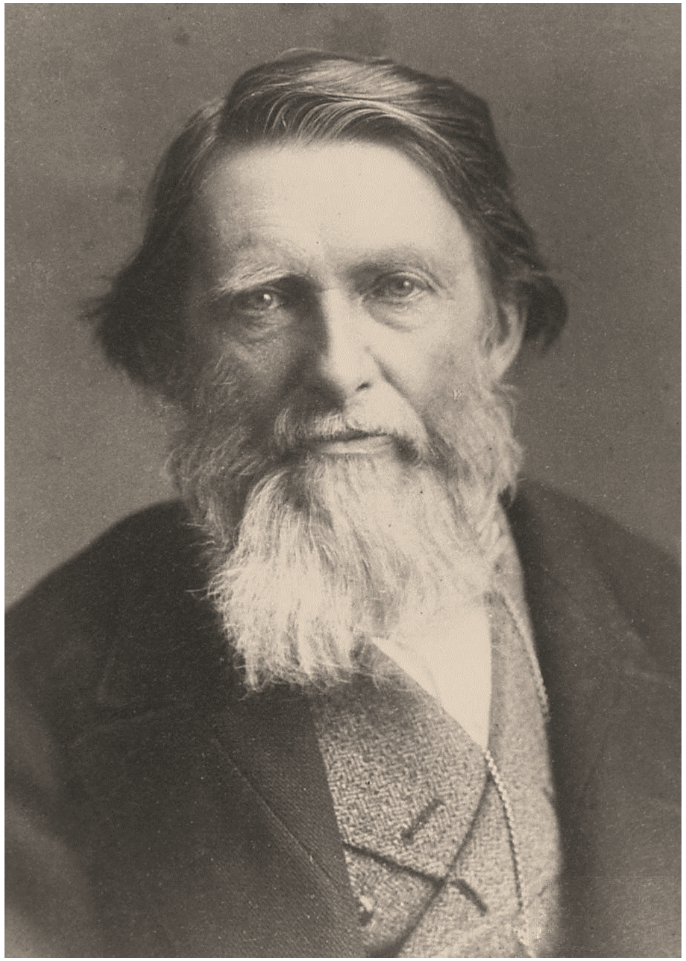
The Condition of England

[2] To whom, then, is [the] wealth of England wealth? Who is it that it blesses; makes happier, wiser, beautifuller, in any way better? Who has got hold of it, to make it fetch and carry for him, like a true servant, not like a false mock-servant; to do him any real service whatsoever? As yet no one. We have more riches than any Nation ever had before; we have less good of them than any Nation ever had before. Our successful industry is hitherto unsuccessful; a strange success, if we stop here! In the midst of *plethoric plenty, the people perish; with gold walls, and full barns, no man feels himself safe or satisfied. Workers, Master Workers, Unworkers, all men, come to a pause; stand fixed, and cannot farther. Fatal paralysis spreading inwards, from the extremities, in St. Ives workhouses, in Stockport cellars, through all limbs, as if towards the heart itself. Have we actually got enchanted, then; accursed by some god?

(in *Longman Anthology* 1128)

John Ruskin

(1819-1900)



John Ruskin (1819-1900) was born in London and educated at home and then studied at Oxford where he took his degree in 1842. He travelled on several occasions to Europe. Frequent visits to Italy revealed to him the greatness of the early Italian masters. He was a fervent lover of art and from early time he developed a warm love for nature and landscape-painting, and in particular for the paintings of J. M. *Turner. He started writing to justify his tastes and finished by building up a system of aesthetics in: *Modern Painters* (5 volumes, 1843-1860) written in defence of Turner, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), *The Stones of Venice* (1851-1853).

When in 1851, the artists of the 'Pre-Raphaelite' group were violently attacked by the critics, he stood forth to defend them in several letters and in the pamphlet *Pre-Raphaelitism* (1851).

Ruskin was also an ardent critic of modern civilisation and the prophet of regeneration. He also contributed several essays to the study of economics which he republished as *Unto this Last* (1862) and *Munera Pulveris* (1872). Here he advocated a system of national education, the organisation of labour and other social reforms. His interest in social reform is again shown in his most popular work, *Sesame and Lilies* (1865), which contains eloquent statements about the meaning of life and the relation of beauty and dignity in daily life to all that is worthwhile in art and morality. He also worked as professor of art at Oxford (between 1869-1878 and 1883-1884). He died in 1900.

John Ruskin was one of the first English writers to express his horror at what industrialism had done to the face of England and to the living and working conditions of men and women. He was well aware that there is no life without industry, but industry without art is ugliness and brutality. As such, he tried to discover what kind of industry had to be developed to escape such ugliness and brutality. At the same time he tried to teach his contemporaries to love what was really beautiful, which could always be found in Truth and Nature.

Ruskin did excellent service to art and raised and ennobled the work of the artist by showing that the true painter should not work for mere recreation or for the gratification of others, but because of his love for Nature, Art and Morality. His style of writing is extremely eloquent, poetical and attractive.

From *Modern Painters*

Modern Painters was initially intended to be a defence of Turner but developed into a complex discussion of the principles of beauty in art, of painting especially landscape painting and the building up a system of aesthetics. Part of *Modern Painters* was meant do discredit the concept that art is merely a form of innocent recreation, rather than an activity associated with the major preoccupations of life. From the paintings of Turner Ruskin develops his theory or realism, which implies fidelity to the truth of vision (Legouis and Cazamian 1155). In addition, he describes the ways in which imagination can respond to the most subtle details of colour and form in the natural world as apposed to the colourless and shapeless inorganic world created by his contemporaries. The book is magnificently written, with amazing descriptions and very unlike any book of art that preceded it. As Mackerness points out (300-1), John Ruskin's words reflect the accuracy and precision of a highly-wrought style, a sense of rhythm and imagery not frequently found in a volume of art criticism.

Greatness in Art

According to Ruskin real beauty is beauty in nature, beauty applicable to natural elements: the upper cloud and the rain cloud, mountains, plains and mountain snow, forest trees and water. Ruskin starts from Turner's paintings and generalises about the principles of beauty in art. In this context he makes a direct connection between beauty, art, truthfulness and morality and insists on the idea that moral virtue makes great art. Consequently he maintains that the painter should have 'ideas' (i.e. moral ideas) and not only technical excellence combined with poetical imagination. Ruskin starts from the fundamental postulate that accomplished works of art are manifestations of essentially moral ideas whose role is to enhance our faculties of perception and render us less sensitive to immoral pleasures. Genuine art springs from a 'right' moral state and can exert a 'right' moral effect on the receiver. The fragment below shows how Ruskin makes a direct connection between art and morality

and insists on the idea that moral virtue makes great art.

Great art dwells on all that is beautiful; but false art omits or changes all that is ugly. Great art accepts Nature as she is, but directs the eyes and thoughts to what is most perfect in her; false art saves itself the trouble of direction by removing and altering whatever it thinks objectionable. […]

The art is greatest which conveys to the mind of the spectator, by any means whatsoever, the greatest number of the greatest ideas; and I call an idea great in proportion as it is received by a higher faculty of the mind, and as it more fully occupies the faculty by which it is received. […] All our moral feelings are so inwoven, with our intellectual powers, that we cannot affect the one without in some degree addressing the other; and in all high ideas is beauty, it is more than probable that much of the pleasure depends on delicate and untraceable perceptions of fitness, property and relation which are purely intellectual and through which we arrive at our noblest ideas of what is commonly called intellectual beauty.

(in *Selections* 101)

The Wanders of Water

For Ruskin, Turner is an almost ideal case to demonstrate the universal presence and innumerable occurrences of water as giver and maintainer of life and to formulate thus his aesthetic creed. Turner is a master of representation of water in practically all of its forms: in the sea and rivers, in the clouds, rain, storm, fog, steam and smoke. Just like the painter, Ruskin almost lyrically identifies and names the different instances of water in nature. But more than that—since it is not easy to represent visually the existence of water in nature, what makes an accomplished artist is his capacity to know how to represent such occurrences and to be able 'to do this perfectly'. Consequently, Ruskin endeavours to teach the artist how to paint such materialisations. This is what constitutes the substance of the passage inserted below.

Of all inorganic substances, acting in their own proper nature, and without assistance or combination, water is the most wonderful. If we think of it as the source of all changefulness and beauty which we have seen in the clouds; then as the instrument by which the earth we have contemplated was modelled into symmetry, and its crags chiselled into grace; then as, in the form of snow, it *robes the mountains it has made, with that transcendent light which we could not have conceived if we had not seen; then as it exists in the foam of the torrent—in the iris which spans it in the morning mist which rises from it, in the deep crystalline pools which mirror its hanging shore, in the broad lake and glancing river; finally, in that which is to all human minds the best emblem of unwearied, unconquerable power, the wild, various. fantastic, tameless unity of the sea; what shall we compare to this mighty, this universal element, for glory and for beauty? or how shall we follow its eternal changefulness of feeling? It is like to paint a soul.

To suggest the ordinary appearance of calm water—to lay on canvass as much evidence of surface and reflection as may make us understand that water is meant—is, perhaps the easiest task of art; and even ordinary and falling water may be sufficiently rendered by observing careful curves of projection with dark ground, and breaking a little white over it, as we see done with judgement and truth by *Ruysdael. But to paint the actual play of hue on the reflective surface, or to give the forms

and fury of water when it begins to show itself—to give the flashing and rocket-like velocity of a noble cataract, or the precision and grace of the sea wave, so exquisitely modelled, though so mockingly transient—so mountainous in its form, yet so cloud-like in its motion—with its variety and delicacy of colour, when every ripple and wreath has some peculiar passage of reflection upon itself alone, and the radiating and *scintillating sunbeams are mixed with the dim hues of transparent depth and the dark rock below;—to do this perfectly, is beyond the power of man; to do it even partially, has been granted to but one or two, even of those few who have dared to attempt it.

(in *Modern Painters* 65-6)

The Slave Ship

The fragment below is emblematic for Ruskin's descriptive art. It is an interpretation of one of Turner's chief paintings, The Slave Ship, *in which the art critic insists on the painter's accomplished use of colour and light – his 'noble mysticism of light' (Legouis and Cazamian 1155) – and his skill in the representation of forms that take shape in nature – in the sky and in the waves of the sea. If Turner's painting is highly emotional and relies very much on fading contours, use of light, and effects of colour, so is Ruskin's style – expressive, impressive, highly contemplative and descriptive reverberating textually and dramatically what the painter conceived visually.*

But, I think, the noblest sea that Turner has ever painted, and, if so, the noblest certainly ever painted by man, is that of the Slave Ship, the chief Academy picture of the Exhibition of 1840. It is a sunset on the Atlantic, after prolonged storm; but the storm is partially *lulled, and the torn and streaming rain-clouds are moving in scarlet lines to lose themselves in the hollow of the night. The whole surface of sea included in the picture is divided into two *ridges of enormous *swell, not high, nor local, but a low, broad *heaving of the whole ocean, like the lifting of its bosom by deep drawn breath after the torture of the storm. Between these two ridges the fire of the sunset falls along the *trough of the sea, *dyeing it with an awful but glorious light, the intense and *lurid splendour which burns like gold, and bathes like blood. Along this fiery path and valley, the *tossing waves by which the swell of the sea is restlessly divided, lift

Cred însă că marea cea mai nobilă pe care a pictat-o vreodată Turner, şi dacă e aşa, cea mai nobilă desigur pe care a pictat-o vreodată omul, este cea din *Slave Ship*, principalul tablou al Academiei la Expoziţia din 1840. Este un apus de soare pe Atlantic după o furtună prelungită; furtuna e însă parţial potolită, iar norii de ploaie sfâşiaţi şi şiroind de apă înaintează în şiruri roşii-violet pierzându-se în adâncul nopţii. Întreaga suprafaţă a mării cuprinsă în tablou este împărţită în două creste de hulă enormă, nu înaltă şi nici izolată ci ca o pulsaţie profundă şi cuprinzătoare a întregului ocean, întocmai ca respiraţia adâncă ce-i umflă pieptul după zbuciumul furtunii. Printre aceste două creste, jarul amurgului coboară în lungul albiei mării, muind-o într-o lumină înfricoşătoare dar magnifică, o strălucire intensă şi lividă, arzând ca aurul şi scăldând totul într-o culoare sângerie. De-a lungul acestei poteci şi văi de foc,

themselves in dark, indefinite, fantastic forms, each casting a faint and ghastly shadow behind it along the illumined foam. They do not rise everywhere, but three or four together in wild groups, fitfully and furiously, as the under strength of the swell compels or permits them; leaving between them treacherous spaces of level and *whirling water, now lighted with green and lamp-like fire, now flashing back the gold of the declining sun, now fearfully dyed from above with the indistinguishable images of the burning clouds, which fall upon them in flakes of *crimson and scarlet, and give to the *reckless waves the added motion of their own fiery flying. Purple and blue, the lurid shadows of the hollow *breakers are cast upon the mist of the night, which gathers cold and low, advancing like the shadow of death upon the guilty ship as it *labours amidst the lightning of the sea, its thin *masts written upon the sky in lines of blood, *girded with condemnation in that fearful *hue which signs the sky with horror, and mixes its flaming flood with the sunlight,—and cast far along the desolate heave of the sepulchral waves, *incarnadines the multitudinous sea.

I believe if I were reduced to rest Turner's immortality upon any single work, I should choose this. Its daring conception, ideal in the highest sense of the word, is based on the purest truth, and wrought out with concentrated knowledge of a life; its colour is absolutely perfect, not one false or morbid

valurile zbuciumate prin care hula mării e necontenit divizată, se înalță în forme fantastice, imprecise şi întunecate, fiecare aruncând în urmă-i o umbră palidă şi fantomatică pe întinsul spumei luminate. Ele nu se înalță pretutindeni, ci câte trei sau patru la un loc, în grupuri capricioase, nestatornice şi mânioase, după cum le sileşte sau le îngăduie tensiunea profundă a hulei, lăsând între ele spații înşelătoare de apă netedă şi rotită, când luminată de focul verzui ca de candelabru, când răsfrângând fulgerul auriu al soarelui ce apune, când înfricoşător muiată în imaginile nedesluşite ale norilor ce ard în înălțimi, căzând asupră-le în fulgi de purpură şi roşu aprins şi dând valurilor nesăbuite adaosul de mişcare al propriului lor zbor de foc. Purpurii şi albastre, nălucirile livide ale talazurilor supte se-ntind peste ceața nopții care se adună rece şi joasă, înaintând ca umbra morții spre vasul ucigaş care se zbate prin fulgerele mării, catargele-i plăpânde înscriind pe cer linii de sânge, în acea culoare înspăimântătoare ce pecetluieşte cerul cu groază şi îşi amestecă potopul de flăcări la lumina soarelui—şi aruncată departe, peste arcuirea dezolantă a valurilor sepulcrale, ele întruchipează marea atât de felurită.

Cred că dacă aş fi constrâns să atribui gloria nemuritoare a lui Turner, unei singure lucrări, aş alege-o pe aceasta. Concepția ei îndrăzneață—ideală în cel mai înalt sens al cuvântului—este bazată pe adevărul cel mai pur şi făurită din

hue in any part or line, and so modulated that every square inch of canvas is perfect composition; its drawing as accurate as fearless; the ship *buoyant, bending and full of motion; its tones as true as they are wonderful; and the whole picture dedicated to the most sublime of subjects and impressions (completing this the perfect system of all truth, which we have shown to be formed by Turner's works)—the power, majesty, and deathfulness of the open, deep, illimitable sea.

(in *Longman Anthology* 1579-80)

cunoştinţe adunate o viaţă întreagă; culoarea ei e absolut perfectă, nici o nuanţă nu e falsă sau morbidă şi totul apare astfel modulat, încât fiecare centimetru pătrat de pânză reprezintă o compoziţie perfectă; desenul îi e tot atât de precis, pe cât e de îndrăzneţ; vasul plutind şi aplecându-se este plin de mişcare; tonurile lui tot atât de adevărate pe cât de minunate; iar întregul tablou este închinat celui mai sublim dintre subiecte şi impresii—completând astfel sistemul perfect al tuturor adevărurilor pe care, cum am arătat, îl formează lucrările lui Turner—maiestuozităţii şi forţei puterii morţii care sălăşluiesc în marea nesfârşită, adâncă şi vastă.

[Traducere de Cristina Micuşan şi Sorin Alexandrescu,
Editura Meridiane, Bucureşti, 1968]

From *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*

This book is a discussion of the primary principles of architecture, an art which had fascinated Ruskin since an early age, an art that he called 'distinctively political'. He urges architects not to sacrifice morality to expediency, as politicians did, and claims that the noblest style in architecture is the Gothic style because it gave free play to the individual workman and is more than any other style associated with virtue and morality.

The seven lamps in the title are the seven Biblical 'lamps'—Sacrifice, Truth, Power, Beauty, Life, Memory and Obedience—which he metaphorically associates with Divine Law and sets forth to illustrate the way they are to be represented in stone.

Nature and Architecture

The extract which follows shows Ruskin as a neo-classicist and early ecologist preaching a return to principles of ancient architecture and insisting on the necessity that there should always be a direct connection between architecture and nature and natural forms.

The very quietness of nature is gradually withdrawn from us; thousands who once in their necessary prolonged travel were subjected to an influence, from the silent sky and slumbering fields, more effectual than known or confessed, now bear with them even there the ceaseless fever of their life; and along the iron veins that traverse the frame of our country, beat and flows the fiery pulses of its exertion, hotter and faster every hour. All vitality is concentrated through this throbbing arteries into the central cities; the country is passed over like a green sea by narrow bridges, and we are thrown back in continually closer crowds upon the city gates. The only influence which can in any wise way take the place of that of the woods and fields, is the

power of ancient Architecture. Do not part with it for the sake of the formal square or of the fenced and planted walk, nor of the goodly street nor opened quay. The pride of the city is not in there. Leave them by the crowd, but remember that there will surely be some within the circuit of the disquieted walls who would ask for some other spots than there where in to walk, for some other forms to meet their sight familiarly.

(in *Selected Writings* 249-50)

Extract from *Lectures on Architecture and Painting* (Lecture 4 on Pre-Raphaelitism)

Ruskin was a champion of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement as for both art had to be essentially a representation of nature, natural shapes and colours. The fragment below is a quintessence of Ruskin's opinion about the movement.

Pre-Raphaelitism has but one principle, that of uncompromising truth in all that it does, obtained by working everything, down to the most minute detail, from nature and from nature only. Every pre-Raphaelite landscape background is painted to the last touch, in the open air, from the thing itself. Ever pre-Raphaelite figure, however studied in expression, is a true portrait of some living person. Every minute accessory is painted in the same manner […] This is the main pre-Raphaelite principle.

(in *Selections from the Writings of John Ruskin* 171)

Charles Dickens

(1812-1870)



Charles Dickens (1812-1870) was born in Portsmouth, Hampshire. His father was a clerk in the Navy Pay Department, an irresponsible man who soon brought the family to serious financial problems. Charles, the eldest son, was withdrawn from school and was now set to manual work in a factory, and his father went to prison for debt. The result for Charles was that the reality of the prison and of the lost, of the oppressed or bewildered child he had to witness, became obsessive images that recur in many of his novels.

Charles Dickens did not get much schooling, he was mostly indebted to his own study. His first job was that of a clerk in a solicitor's office; then he became a shorthand reporter in the lawcourts (thus gaining a knowledge of the legal world often used in the novels), and, finally, he worked as a parliamentary and newspaper reporter. Much drawn to the theatre, Dickens nearly became a professional actor in 1832.

He began to write stories and descriptive essays to magazines and newspapers; these attracted attention and were reprinted as *Sketches by 'Boz'* (February 1836). *Pickwick Papers* started as explanatory chapters to accompany engravings by a well-known artist of the day. When the first instalments were published, they proved to be an instant success and many believed that the chapters were more interesting than the drawings. In parallel, Dickens started working on a new novel, *Oliver Twist*, which he also published serially (1837-1839), a manner of publishing that would prove to be very efficient in his case.

In April 1836 he married Catherine, eldest daughter of a respected Scottish journalist and man of letters, George Hogarth, and soon his first child was born. But their marriage was not a happy one and since May 1858 Catherine Dickens lived apart from him.

For several years his life continued to be lived at high intensity. Finding serialization pleasant and profitable, he repeated the *Pickwick* experience of 20 monthly parts in *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-1839),*The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-1841) and *Barnaby Rudge* (1841).

The success of Dickens's fiction owed much to its sincerity and directness, being so easy to adapt into effective stage versions. Sometimes twenty London theatres simultaneously were producing adaptations of his latest story; so even non-readers became acquainted with simplified versions of his works.

Exhausted, he took a five-month vacation in America where he was received with quasi-royal honours as a literary celebrity.

The result of this visit was *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843-1844), a novel that contains many pictures of America and its inhabitants.

Aware of the dangers of the serial publication of novels, Dickens tried hard to create an artistic unity in every novel, with often several complicated plots involving scores of characters. His next novels, *Dombey and Son* (1846-1848) and *A Christmas Carol* (1843) proved that he had remained a master of structural cohesiveness. *A Christmas Carol* is a fine example of Dickens's Christmas books; he was very proud of it and always included portions of it at his public readings.

Dickens had now become very much of a public figure, one of the most successful periodical editors and the finest dramatic recitalist of the day.

He returned to journalism in 1846 as founder-editor of the *Daily News* (soon to become the leading Liberal newspaper) but this decision soon proved a mistake—one of his the biggest fiascos. Two novels, *Dombey and Son* (1846-1848) and the autobiographic *David Copperfield* (1849-1850) helped him, however, restore his renown as creator of literature.

The novels of these years, *Bleak House* (1852-1853), *Hard Times* (1854), and *Little Dorrit* (1855-1857), were much 'darker' than their predecessors and reflected somehow the fact that Dickens's spirit and confidence in the future were declining. In the creations of this period the setting, in general, and London, in particular, are now grimmer than ever before and the corruption, complacency, and superficiality of 'respectable' society are fiercely attacked.

Ever since 1853 he had planned to return to his activity as paid reader, a good decision, which made his remarkable theatrical talents, his skill in delighting an audience even more evident, paralleled as they were in the performable nature of his fiction. But this activity also left its imprint on the writer's health.

In *Barnaby Rudge* he had attempted the genre of the historical novel. He repeated this experience in *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), a narrative set in the late eighteenth century about the French Revolution. Now he relied less than before on characterization, dialogue, and humour. Though he presented with great vigour and understanding the spectacle of large-scale mob violence, the novel lacks many of his strengths to count among his major works.

Great Expectations (1860-1861) resembles *David Copperfield* in being a first-person narration and in drawing on parts of Dickens's personality and experience. *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-1865), a large inclusive novel, continues this critique of monetary and class values.

His last novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870), meant to be a detective story, was left uncompleted. He died suddenly at Gad's Hill on 9 June 1870, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, lamented over the whole civilised world.

Very many of Dickens's novels were written to entertain but also to educate—many are fables about the good and the evil. In order to maintain the readers' interest awake and achieve the success of his novels Dickens often uses elements of the detective novel, parallelisms, sensational incidents, melodrama, etc.

Dickens's novels deal chiefly with the life of the middle and lower classes of society. The tone of narration is frequently humorous, meant to amuse; the characters are often 'caricatures of comedy or monstrous puppets of melodrama' (Allen 163), they are placed in amusing situations and depicted in a comical way but always with sympathy and warmth, especially when he deals with children and unfortunate, oppressed and poor members of society. Dickens is frequently satirical, but his satire means making fun of its object by holding it up to ridicule—but he does not associate it with sarcasm and irony as in the case of Thackeray. And if Dickens wants to be critical—as he often is, especially in his later creations—his criticism is commonly directed against institutions and not individuals seen rather as victims, having no choice than to be what they are.

From *Oliver Twist*

Oliver Twist is one of Dickens’s novels where the theme of the orphan or abandoned and oppressed child occupies a central position. And, as common with Dickens, the book is a fantasy of good and evil (Allen 163), a successful fairy-tale (Horsman 103) about children for grown ups. In particular, it is the story of Oliver Twist, an orphan, brought up in a workhouse under cruel conditions. But the author’s concern is more general: the social and moral evil—the workhouse system and the criminal world.

The novel contains some great and memorable scenes, but the humanitarian feeling is not sufficient to give it adequate form and save it from faults in its construction. Oliver’s salvation remains accidental, a sort of *deus ex machina* which happens when the author has exhausted his resources. From a literary point of view the novel cannot be considered a Dickensian achievement, but it is important from the light cast on children, a theme successfully exploited by the novelist.

A Respectable Old Gentleman

Having run away from the workhouse to escape unhappy life as an apprentice, Oliver reaches London. He is miserable, penniless and shelterless. He meets Jack Dawins, ‘the Artful Dodger’, who, realising that Oliver would excellently fit into Fagin’s get-rich undertaking, decides to introduce him to Fagin, the cynical employer of ‘hopeful pupils’, ‘a masterpiece of grotesque fantasy’ (Sampson 625) and one of Dickens’s prototypes of evil.

‘This is him, Fagin,’ said Jack Dawkins; ‘my friend Oliver

Fagin, îți prezint pe prietenul meu Oliver Twist – zise Jack

Twist.'

The Jew grinned; and, making a low obeisance to Oliver, took him by the hand, and hoped he should have the honour of his intimate acquaintance. Upon this, the young gentleman with the pipes came round him, and shook both his hands very hard—especially the one in which he held his little bundle. One young gentleman was very anxious to hang up his cap for him; and another was so obliging as to put his hands in his pockets, in order that, as he was very tired, he might not have the trouble of emptying them, himself, when he went to bed. These civilities would probably be extended much farther, but for a liberal exercise of the Jew's toasting-fork on the heads and shoulders of the affectionate youths who offered them.

'We are very glad to see you, Oliver, very,' said the Jew. 'Dodger, take off the sausages; and draw a tub near the fire for Oliver. Ah, you're a-staring at the pocket-handkerchiefs! eh, my dear. There are a good many of 'em, *ain't there? We've just looked 'em out, ready for the wash; that's all, Oliver; that's all. Ha! ha! ha!'

The latter part of this speech, was hailed by a boisterous shout from all the hopeful pupils of the merry old gentleman. In the midst of which they went to supper.

Oliver ate his share, and the Jew then mixed him a glass of hot gin-and-water: telling him he must drink it off directly,

Dawkins.

Bătrânul rânji şi făcu o plecăciune adâncă lui Oliver. Apoi, luându-l de mână, îi spuse că nădăjduieşte să aibă onoarea de-a face cunoştinţă mai de aproape. Atunci tinerii cu pipe îl înconjurară scuturându-i voiniceşte amândouă mâinile – mai cu seamă pe aceea în care ţinea bocceaua. Unul dintre domnişori se grăbi să-i scoată şapca din cap, altul îi vârî mâinile în buzunar, ca să-l scutească de oboseala de-a le goli singur înainte de culcare. Şi probabil că amabilii tineri ar fi mers cu politeţea departe de tot, dacă bătrânul n-ar fi prins a le împărţi cu dărnicie lovituri de furculiţă peste capete şi peste mâini.

—Foarte încântaţi de cunoştinţă, Oliver, foarte încântaţi —zise bătrânul. Şmechere, scoate cârnaţii din tigaie şi trage o lădiţă lângă foc, pentru Oliver. Aha! Te uiţi la batiste, dragă! Sunt tare multe, nu-i aşa? Păi tocmai le-am scos ca să le dăm la spălat. Asta-i, Oliver, asta-i... ha, ha, ha!

Ultima parte a discursului fu întâmpinată cu strigăte de entuziasm de către toţi acei tineri de viitor, demni discipoli ai hazliului evreu.

Şi-n mijlocul gălăgiei se aşezară la masă.

Oliver mâncă porţia lui, apoi bătrânul amestecă pentru el într-un pahar gin fierbinte cu apă, îndemnându-l să-l dea iute de duşcă, pentru că trebuia să treacă paharul altui domn

because another gentleman wanted the tumbler. Oliver did as he was desired. Immediately afterwards he felt himself gently lifted on to one of the sacks; and then he sunk into a deep sleep. […]

It was late next morning when Oliver awoke, from a sound, long sleep. There was no other person in the room but the old Jew, who was boiling some coffee in a saucepan for breakfast, and whistling softly to himself as he stirred it round and round, with an iron spoon. He would stop every now and then to listen when there was the least noise below: and when he had satisfied himself, he would go on whistling and stirring again, as before.

Although Oliver had roused himself from sleep, he was not thoroughly awake. There is a drowsy state, between sleeping and waking, when you dream more in five minutes with your eyes half open, and yourself half conscious of everything that is passing around you, than you would in five nights with your eyes fast closed, and your senses wrapt in perfect unconsciousness. At such time, a mortal knows just enough of what his mind is doing, to form some glimmering conception of its mighty powers, its bounding from earth and spurning time and space, when freed from the restraint of its corporeal associate.

Oliver was precisely in this condition. He saw the Jew with his half-closed eyes; heard his low whistling; and recognised the sound of the spoon grating against the saucepan's sides: and yet

ce aştepta. Olier se supuse. Îndată după asta, se simţi luat binişor pe sus şi aşezat pe unul din saci; apoi căzu într-un somn adânc.

A doua zi dimineaţa, Oliver se deşteptă târziu, dintr-un somn adânc şi lung. În odaie se afla numai bătrânul, care fierbea nişte cafea pentru dejun într-o cratiţă, fluierând încet pentru dânsul pe când mesteca într-una cu o lingură de fier. De câte ori auzea vreun zgomot cât de slab venind de jos, se oprea din treabă, ascultând. Apoi, când se încredinţa că-i linişte, se apuca iar să fluiere învârtind mai departe.

Cu toate că Oliver se trezise singur, încă nu era bine dezmeticit. Se afla în acea stare de amorţire dintre somn şi trezire, când visezi în cinci minute cu ochii pe jumătate deschişi, fără să-ţi dai bine seama de ce-i în jurul tău, mai mult decât visezi în cinci nopţi cu ochii bine închişi şi simţurile cufundate într-o adâncă inconştienţă. În acele clipe, omul îşi dă destul de bine seama de cele ce se petrec în mintea lui, ca să-şi poată face o slabă idee de puterea gândului care, dezlegat de învelişul lui pieritor, se înalţă deasupra pământului, jucându-se cu timpul şi spaţiul.

Oliver se afla tocmai într-o asemenea stare. Stând cu ochii întredeschişi, îl vedea pe bătrân, îl auzea cum fluieră încetişor şi desluşea sunetul lingurii ce freca de pereţii cratiţei. În acelaşi timp, mintea lui călătorea în trecut, cercetând pe toţi

the self-same senses were mentally engaged, at the same time, in busy action with almost everybody he had ever known.

When the coffee was done, the Jew drew the saucepan to the *hob. Standing, then in an irresolute attitude for a few minutes, as if he did not well know how to employ himself, he turned round and looked at Oliver, and called him by his name. He did not answer, and was to all appearances asleep.

After satisfying himself upon this head, the Jew stepped gently to the door: which he fastened. He then drew forth: as it seemed to Oliver, from some trap in the floor: a small box, which he placed carefully on the table. His eyes glistened as he raised the lid, and looked in. Dragging an old chair to the table, he sat down; and took from it a magnificent gold watch, sparkling with jewels.

'Aha!' said the Jew, shrugging up his shoulders, and distorting every feature with a hideous grin. 'Clever dogs! Clever dogs! *Staunch to the last! Never told the old parson where they were. Never *poached upon old Fagin! And why should they? It wouldn't have loosened the knot, or kept the drop up, a minute longer. No, no, no! Fine fellows! Fine fellows!'

With these, and other muttered reflections of the like nature, the Jew once more deposited the watch in its place of safety. At least half a dozen more were severally drawn forth from the same box, and surveyed with equal pleasure; besides rings,

acei care îi cunoscuse până atunci.

Isprăvind cafeaua, bătrânul puse cratița jos pe grătarul vetrei şi rămase câteva minute nehotărât, ca şi cum nu ştia ce să facă. Apoi se întoarse, se uită la Oliver şi-l strigă pe nume. Băiatul nu răspunse, părând că doarme adânc.

Asigurat dinspre partea aceasta, bătrânul se duse încetişor la uşa şi-o încuie. Apoi i se păru lui Oliver că-l vede scoțând dintr-o trapă sub podea o lădiță mică, pe care o aşeză cu grijă pe masă. Ochii bătrânului sclipiră când ridică încet capacul cutiei şi privi înăuntru. Trase lângă masă un scaun vechi, se aşeză şi scoase din lădiță un ceas de aur minunat, bătut în pietre scumpe.

—Ha! făcu bătrânul, ridicând din umeri şi schimonosindu-şi fața într-un rânjet groaznic. Şmecheri băieți! Grozav de şmecheri! S-au ținut bine până la capăt! N-au spus bătrânului pastor unde-s lucrurile! N-au turnat pe tata Fagin! La ce bun să-l trădeze? Nu li s-ar fi lărgit nici ştreangul, nici scăunelul n-ar fi rămas pe loc. Nu, nu, zău! Straşnici băieți! Straşnici băieți!...

Şi tot mormăind în felul acesta, bătrânul puse înapoi obiectul la locul lui de taină. Scoțând apoi din lădiță încă vreo jumătate de duzină de ceasuri, începu a le cerceta pe rând cu aceeaşi plăcere. Apărură apoi inele, broşe, brățări şi tot felul de obiecte prețioase, din materiale atât de scumpe şi de-o

brooches, bracelets, and other articles of jewellery, of such magnificent materials, and costly workmanship, that Oliver had no idea, even of their names.

Having replaced these trinkets, the Jew took out another: so small that it lay in the palm of his hand. There seemed to be some very minute inscription on it; for the Jew laid it flat upon the table, and shading it with his hand, pored over it, long and earnestly. At length he put it down, as if despairing of success; and, leaning back in his chair, muttered:

'What a fine thing capital punishment is! Dead men never repent; dead men never bring awkward stories to light. Ah, it's a fine thing for the trade! Five of 'em strung up in a row, and none left to play *booty, or turn white-*livered!'

As the Jew uttered these words, his bright dark eyes, which had been staring vacantly before him, fell on Oliver's face; the boy's eyes were fixed on his in mute curiosity; and although the recognition was only for an instant—for the briefest space of time that can possibly be conceived—it was enough to show the old man that he had been observed.

He closed the lid of the box with a loud crash; and, laying his hand on a bread knife which was on the table, started furiously up. He trembled very much though; for, even in his terror, Oliver could see that the knife quivered in the air.

'What's that?' said the Jew. 'What do you watch me for? Why

lucrătură aşa de minunată, că Oliver nu le cunoştea nici măcar după nume.

După ce le aşeză pe toate la loc, bătrânul mai scoase un ultim giuvaer, aşa de mic şi de gingaş, că-i încăpea în podul palmei. Părea să aibă o inscripție foarte fin gravată pe el, căci bătrânul, aşezându-l pe masă şi umbrindu-l cu mâna, îl cercetă multă vreme cu încordare. La urmă puse la loc, ca şi cum ar fi renunțat să mai dezlege o enigmă, lăsându-se pe spătarul scaunului, murmură:

—Minunat lucru pedeapsa cu moartea! Morții nu se mai pot pocăi! Nici nu mai pot da la iveală istorii neplăcute! Ha! straşnică rânduială pentru meseria noastră! Cinci la rând înşirați pe funie, n-a rămas nici unul care să-şi teamă pielea şi să-l vândă pe tata Fagin!

Rostind vorbele acestea pe când îşi rotea ochii negri şi sclipitori în jurul său, la întâmplare, privirea bătrânului dădu de chipul lui Oliver. Copilul îl țintea cu ochii plini de uimire. N-a fost decât o clipă, dar bătrânul îşi dădu seama că băiatul îl spionase.

Izbi cu zgomot capacul lădiței şi, apucând un cuțit de pâine ce se afla pe masă, se ridică furios. Tremura însă atât de tare, încât Oliver, cu toată spaima, băgă de seamă cum îi vibra în mână cuțitul.

—Ce-nseamnă asta? zise bătrânul. De ce mă spionezi?

are you awake? What have you seen? Speak out, boy! Quick— quick! for your life.

(in *Oliver Twist* 59-61)

De când eşti treaz? Ce-ai văzut? Răspunde, n-auzi? Şi cât mai repede, dacă ții la viață!

[Traducere de Profira și Teodora Sadovean, Editura Tineretului, București, 1968]

From *Hard Times*

Hard Times is a 'condition of England novel', an anti-Utilitarian manifesto, a novel dealing with the material and spiritual face of England during the Industrial Revolution and its aftermath. It shows quite clearly Dickens's intention to use fiction for purposes of social protest. The story is the result of the author's own observations of industrial condition in Manchester.

It centres around Mr Gradgrind and his family of two children, Luisa and Tom. According to Williams (93), Mr Gradgrind embodies the driving force of the Industrial Revolution in its aggressive ideal of making money and seeking power. He is the author of a system of education according to Utilitarianist principles of sheer pragmatism, a system that he applies to his pupils and his own children. But this method will have disastrous effects on both and ends in total failure. From this point of view, as Childers remarks (88), this novel forgives its characters practically nothing.

This work is a novel of 'industrial fiction' (Childers 89), an important product of the so-called industrial culture generated by the Industrial Revolution.

Coketown

The background against which Dickens exposes the wrongs of society to the conscience of his readers is Coketown, an imaginary industrial centre, possibly a fictional replica of real Manchester and obviously a dystopian representation of the industrial city. This fictional town, blackened by smoke, where life is dull and monotonous stands for all the English industrial towns of the nineteenth century. The brutal penetration of industry into Coketown is emblematic for the sweeping diffusion of the Industrial Revolution everywhere in England.

[Coketown] was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but, as matters

[Coketown] Era un oraş contruit din cărămidă roşie, adică din cărămidă care ar fi trebuit să fie roşie dacă fumul şi cenuşa

stood it was a town on unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of buildings full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness. It contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets more like one another, inhabited by people like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and tomorrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next.

These attributes of Coketown were in the main inseparable from the work by which it was sustained; against them were to be set off, comforts of life which found their way all over the world, and elegancies of life which made, we will not ask how much of the fine lady, who could scarcely bear to hear the place mentioned. The rest of its features were voluntary, and they were these.

You saw nothing in Coketown but what was severely workful. If the members of a religious persuasion built a chapel

i-ar fi îngăduit; dar astfel stând lucrurile, era un oraş colorat nefiresc în roşu şi negru, parcă ar fi fost chipul zugrăvit al unui sălbatic. Era un oraş al maşinăriilor şi coşurilor înalte, din care izvorau fără încetare şerpi nesfârşiţi de fum, ce nu mai ajungeau niciodată să se descolăcească. Avea un canal negru şi un râu ce-şi rostogolea apele înroşite de o vopsea rău mirositoare, apoi vaste îngrămădiri de contrucţii pline de ferestre, care răsunau de zgomote şi vibrau cât e ziua de lungă şi în care pistonul maşinii cu abur se mişca monoton în sus şi în jos, parcă era capul unui elefant cuprins de o nebunie melancolică. Avea mai multe străzi mari, toate foarte asemănătoare una cu alta, şi o mulţime de străzi mici, şi mai asemănătoare între ele, locuite de oameni la fel de asemănători unul cu altul, care plecau şi se întorceau la aceleaşi ore, făcând să răsune aceleaşi pavaje sub aceiaşi paşi, ca să facă aceeaşi muncă, şi pentru care fiece zi era aidoma celei de ieri şi de mâine, şi fiece an, imaginea celui trecut, ori celui viitor.

Aceste caracteristici ale oraşului erau în general strâns legate de industria care-l întreţinea; în schimb, toate-şi găseau compensare în faptul că de aici se răspândeau în toată lumea mijloace de confort şi lux necesare vieţii civilizate, de care profita, nici nu mai putem spune cât, nobila doamnă, ce abia putea suporta să audă rostit numele acelui loc. Celelalte caracteristici ale oraşului erau mai mult sau mai puţin locale. Iată-le: nu vedeai nimic în Coketown care să nu aibă aspect strict practic. Dacă

there—as the members of eighteen religious persuasions had done—they made it a pious warehouse of red brick, with sometimes (but this is only in highly ornamental examples) a bell in a birdcage on the top of it. The solitary exception was the New Church; a *stuccoed edifice with a square steeple over the door, terminating in four short *pinnacles like florid wooden legs. All the public inscriptions in the town were painted alike, in severe characters of black and white. The jail might have been the infirmary, the infirmary might have been the jail, the town-hall might have been either, or both, or anything else, for anything that appeared to the contrary in the graces of their construction. Fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the material aspect of the town; fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the immaterial. The M'Choakumchild school was all fact, and the school of design was all fact, and the relations between master and man were all fact, and everything was fact between the lying-in hospital and the cemetery, and what you couldn't state in figures, or show to be purchasable in the cheapest market and saleable in the dearest, was not, and never should be, world without end, Amen.

A town so sacred to fact, and so triumphant in its assertion, of course got on well? Why no, not quite well. No? Dear me!

No. Coketown did not come out of its own furnaces, in all respects like gold that had stood the fire. First, the perplexing

membrii unei secte religioase ridicau acolo o biserică—aşa cum făcuseră membrii a optsprezece secte religioase—construiau un fel de magazie de rugăciuni din cărămidă roşie, care avea uneori (dar numai la acele exemplare cu un stil excesiv de ornamentat), un clopot într-un fel de colivie aşezată în vârful ei. Singura excepție era Biserica Nouă, un edificiu acoperit cu pereți acoperiți cu stuc şi cu o clopotniță pătrată deasupra porții, terminându-se cu patru turnulețe scurte ca nişte picioare de lemn ornamentate. Toate inscripțiile publice din oraş erau scrise la fel, cu litere severe, vopsite negru pe alb. Închisoarea ar fi putut tot atât de bine să fie spital, spitalul ar fi putut să fie închisoare, primăria ar fi putut fi oricare dintre ele, sau amândouă, sau oricare alt edificiu, căci nici una dintre clădiri nu vădea vreo caracteristică în grațioasa ei construcție. Fapt, fapt, fapt vădea pretutindeni oraşul din punct de vedere material; fapt, fapt, fapt pretutindeni şi din punct de vedere spiritual. Şcoala M'Choakumchild era numai fapt, şi şcoala de desen era tot numai fapt; şi totul era numai fapt, şi relațiile dintre patron şi lucrător erau numai fapt, şi totul era numai fapt, de la maternitate până la cimitir, iar tot ceea ce nu se putea evalua în cifre sau se dovedea că nu putea fi cumpărat la prețul cel mai scăzut şi vândut la prețul cel mai ridicat nu exista şi n-avea să existe niciodată, în vecii vecilor, amin!

Un oraş atât de închinat faptului, pe care-l proclama

mystery of the place was, Who belonged to the eighteen denominations? Because, whoever did, the labouring people did not. It was very strange to walk through the streets on a Sunday morning, and note how few of them the barbarous *jangling of bells that was driving the sick and nervous mad, called away from their own quarter, from their own close rooms, from the corners of their own streets, where they lounged *listlessly, gazing at all the church and chapel going, as at a thing with which they had no manner of concern. Nor was it merely the stranger who noticed this, because there was a native organization in Coketown itself, whose members were to be heard of in the House of Commons every session, indignantly petitioning for acts of parliament that should make these people religious by main force. Then came the *Teetotal Society, who complained that these same people *would* get drunk, and showed in *tabular statements that they did get drunk, and proved at tea parties that no inducement, human or Divine (except a medal), *would* induce them to *forego their custom of getting drunk. Then came the chemist and druggist, with other tabular statements, showing that when they didn't get drunk, they took opium. Then came the experienced chaplain of the jail, with more tabular statements, outdoing all the previous tabular statements, and showing that the same people *would* resort to low haunts, hidden from the public eye,

într-un mod atât de triumfător, de bună seamă că trebuia să fie înfloritor, nu-i aşa? Ei bine, nu era chiar aşa. Nu? Cum se poate?

Nu. Coketown nu ieşea din cuptoarele lui tot atât de curat ca aurul trecut prin foc. Mai întâi, cel mai uimitor mister al locului era: cine făcea parte din cele optsprezece secte religioase? Căci oricare vor fi fost adepții, cei din clasa muncitoare în niciun caz nu erau. Foarte ciudat ți se părea când te plimbai prin oraş duminica dimineața, să observi cât de puțini oameni răspundeau dangătului barbar al clopotelor, ce scotea din minți pe cei mai nervoşi şi bolnavi. Puțini erau şi aceia care-şi părăseau cartierele sau camerele nesănătoase, ca să hoinărească pe la colțul străzilor, privind cu un aer plictisit la activitatea bisericilor şi capelelor, ca şi cum treaba asta nu-i privea deloc. Dar nu numai străinii observau asta; exista chiar şi în Coketown o asociație locală, iar membrii ei puteau fi auziți în Camera Comunelor, în fiecare sesiune, cerând cu indignare un act al Parlamentului care să-i silească prin forță pe acei oameni să fie religioşi. Apoi venea la rând societatea de temperanță, care se plângea că aceiaşi oameni aveau obiceiul să se îmbete, arătând în referate statistice că într-adevăr se îmbătau şi dovedind la întruniriunde se bea numai ceai că nici un argument omenesc sau divin (afară de o medalie) nu i-ar putea convinge să se lase de băutură. Apoi mai erau farmacistul şi droghistul, care veneau cu alte statistici, arătând că atunci când nu se îmbătau, luau opiu. Mai venea la rând preotul

where they heard low singing and saw low dancing, and *mayhap joined in it; and where A. B., aged twenty-four next birthday, and committed for eighteen months' solitary, had himself said (not that he had ever shown himself particularly worthy of belief) his ruin began, as he was perfectly sure and confident that otherwise he would have been a tip-top moral specimen.

(in *Hard Times* 26-8)

închisorii, om plin de experiență, cu şi mai multe statistici, ce le întreceau pe toate celelalte de mai înainte, arătând că aceiaşi oameni aveau obiceiul să frecventeze localuri de perdiție ascunse de ochii lumii, unde ascultau cântece ruşinoase, la care uneori chiar se alăturau. Astfel, A.B., în vârstă de 24 de ani, condamnat la optsprezece luni de închisoare, mărturisise el singur (fără să se fi arătat vreodată vrednic de vreo deosebită încredere) că acele localuri îl atrăseseră pe calea pierzaniei, fiind perfect convins că altfel ar fi rămas un exemplar moral de primă calitate.

[Traducere de Valeria și Teodora Sadoveanu, Editura pentru Literatură Universală, București, 1964]

Teach Nothing but Facts

Singurul lucru folositor

The two fragments that follow illustrate Mr Bounderby's principles of education. He is a man who fanatically believes in facts and statistics and nothing else. For him, feelings, imagination and dreams have to be excluded from existence.

'Now, what I want is Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plan nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon facts. Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir!'

(in *Hard Times* 7)

—Fapte, iată ceea ce doresc eu! Învățătura pe care le-o vei da băieților şi fetelor de aici să cuprindă numai Fapte. În viață n-ai nevoie decât de Fapte. Să nu sădeşti nimic altceva, şi toate celelalte smulge-le! Numai cu ajutorul Faptelor poți forma mintea unui animal cugetător; nimic altceva nu le poate fi de folos vreodată! Acesta-i principiul după care îmi educ propriii mei copii şi, de asemenea, şi principiul după care educ copiii de aici. Aşa că rămâi strict la Fapte, domnule!

[Traducere de Valeria și Teodora Sadoveanu, Editura pentru Literatură Universală, București, 1964]

Girl Number Twenty

In Mr Bounderby's school children have to be educated according to the Utilitarian principles of facts, figures and exactness brought to the extreme, the pupils being considered mere receptacles of pragmatic information. The manifest results of this system of education are discernible in Bitzer's definition of a horse.

'Girl number twenty,' said Mr Gradgrind, squarely pointing with his square forefinger, 'I don't know that girl. Who is that girl?'

'Sissy Jupe, Sir,' explained number twenty, blushing, standing, up, and curtseying.

'Sissy is not a name,' said Mr Gradgrind. 'Don't call yourself Sissy, call yourself Cecilia.'

"It's father *as calls me Sissy, sir, returned the young girl in a trembling voice, and with another courtesy.

'Then he has no business to do it,' said Mr Gradgrind. 'Tell him he mustn't. Cecilia Jupe. Let me see. What is your father?'

'He belongs to the horse-riding, if you please, sir.'

Mr Gradgrind frowned, and waved off the objectionable calling with his hand.

'We don't want to know anything about that here. You mustn't tell us about that, here. Your father *breaks horses, don't he?'

'If you please, sir, when they can get any to break, they do

—Fata numărul douăzeci, spuse domnul Gradgrind, arătând hotărât direcția cu degetu-i pătrat. N-o cunosc pe fata numărul douăzeci! Cum o cheamă pe fata asta?

—Sissy Jupe, domnule, lămuri numărul douăzeci, înroșindu-se, sculându-se în picioare și făcând o reverență.

—Sissy nu-i un nume, spuse domnul Grangrind. Nu te cheamă Sissy, te cheamă Cecilia.

—Tata așa îmi spune, Sissy, domnule, răspunse fetița cu voce tremurândă, făcând din nou o reverență.

—Asta n-are nici un sens, spuse domnul Gradgrind. Să-i spui că nu trebuie să mai continue să-ți spună astfel. Cecilia Jupe. Să vedem. Ce-i tatăl tău?

—Face parte din trupa de călăreți, vă rog domnule.

Domnul Gradgrind se încruntă, și cu un gest al mâinii alungă departe de el denumirea aceea nepotrivită.

—Nu vrem să știm nimic despre așa ceva aici! Nu se cade să ne vorbești despre asemenea lucruri aici. Tatăl tău este îmblânzitor de cai, nu-i așa?

break horses in the ring, sir.'

'You mustn't tell us about the ring here. Very well, then. Describe your father as a horsebreaker. He doctors sick horses, I *dare say?'

'Oh yes, sir.'

'Very well, then. He is a veterinary surgeon, a *farrier and horsebreaker. Give me the definition of a horse.'

(Sissy Jupe thrown into the greatest alarm by this demand.)

'Girl number twenty unable to define a horse!' said Mr Gradgrind, for the general *behoof of all the little *pitchers. 'Girl number twenty possessed of no facts, in reference to one of the commonest of animals! Some boy's definition of a horse. Bitzer, yours.'

The square finger, moving here and there, lighted suddenly on Bitzer, perhaps because he chanced to sit in the same ray of sunlight which, darting in at one of the bare windows of the intensely whitewashed room, irradiated Sissy. For boys and girls sat on the face of the inclined plane in two compact bodies, divided up the centre by a narrow interval; and Sissy, being at the corner of a row on the other side, came in for the beginning of a sunbeam, of which Bitzer, being at the corner of a row on the other side, a few rows in advance, caught the end. […]

'Bitzer,' said Thomas Gradgrind. 'Your definition of a horse.'

'Quadruped. *Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-

—Da, domnule, vă rog. Când se găsesc cai de îmblânzit, sunt îmblânziți în arenă, domnule.

—Nu trebuie să pomenești de arenă aici. Așa, foarte bine. Ne descrii pe tatăl tău drept un îmblânzitor de cai. Se pricepe să îngrijească și cai bolnavi, probabil?

—A, da, domnule.

—Așa, foarte bine. E veterinar, potcovar și îmblânzitor de cai. Spune-mi cum definești un cal.

(Sissy Jupe e cuprinsă de o spaimă grozavă la această întrebare.)

—Fata numărul douăzeci nu-i în stare să definească un cal! Spuse domnul Gradgrind pentru lămurirea generală a tuturor ulcioarașelor. Fata numărul douăzeci nu cunoaște niciun fapt în legătură cu unul dintre cele mai cunoscute animale! Unul dintre băieți să-mi dea definiția calului. Bitzer, dumneata!

Degetul pătrat, mișcându-se încolo și încoace, se abătu deodată asupra lui Bitzer, poate din pricină că se nimerise să stea în aceeași rază de soare, ce pătrundea printr-una din ferestrele goale ale sălii cu pereții de o albeață orbitoare, luminând-o pe Sissy; căci băieții și fetele erau așezați pe suprafața planului înclinat în două grupe compacte, despărțite la mijloc printr-o cărare îngustă, și Sissy, care stătea la capătul unui șir din partea însorită, primea începutul razei de soare, pe când Bitzer, aflându-se în capătul altui rând, din cealaltă parte, și cu câteva

four *grinders, four *eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. *Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod* with iron. Age known by marks in mouth.'

'Now girl number twenty,' said Mr Gradgrind. 'You know what a horse is.'

(in *Hard Times* 8-10)

rânduri mai în față, prindea sfârșitul ei. Dar pe când fata avea ochii și părul așa de negri încât soarele, luminându-le, părea că le sporește culoarea și strălucirea, băiatul avea ochii așa de palizi și părul așa de bălai, încât lui aceeași rază îi lua cu totul și urma de culoare ce-o mai avea. Ochii lui reci nici n-ai fi putut spune că-s ochi dacă genele scurte, provocând un contrast cu împrejurimile și mai palide, nu le-ar fi conturat forma. Părul tuns scurt putea fi luat drept continuarea pistruilor gălbui care-i acopereau fruntea și obrazul. Pielea era atât de lipsită de culoarea naturală a sănătății, încât dădea impresia că ar fi sângerat alb dacă, din întâmplare, s-ar fi tăiat.

—Bitzer, spuse Thomas Gradgrind, cum definești dumneata calul?

—Patruped. Ierbivor. Patruzeci de dinți, și anume: douăzeci și patru de molari, patru canini și doisprezece incisivi. Primăvara își schimbă părul, în ținuturile mlăștinoase își schimbă copitele. Are copite tari, ce trebuie potcovite cu fier. Vârsta se cunoaște după anumite semne din gură.

Astfel (mai adăugând încă multe) vorbi Bitzer.

—Acum, fata numărul douăzeci, spuse domnul Gradgrind, știi ce este un cal.

[Traducere de Valeria și Teodora Sadoveanu, Editura pentru Literatură Universală, București, 1964]

Curse the Hour

Prăbuşire

The text below records the moments when Louisa Bounderby, Mr Bounderby's eldest daughter, returns to the home of her father with shattered mind after having accepted a mis-matched marriage with Mr Bounderby and having almost become an adulteress seduced by the heartless James Harthouse. The scene between daughter and father is one of the most dramatic ones in the novel, full of despair and accusations as Louisa pathetically reproaches her father the way he brought her up and subsequently ruined her life.

The thunder was rolling into distance, and the rain was pouring down like a deluge, when the door of his Mr Gradgrind's room opened. He looked round the lamp upon his table and saw with amazement, his eldest daughter.

'Louisa!'

'Father, I want to speak to you.'

'What is the matter? How strange you look! And good Heaven,' said Mr Gradgrind, wondering more and more, 'have you come here exposed to this storm?'

She put her hands to her dress, as if she hardly knew. 'Yes.' Then she uncovered her head, and letting her cloak and hood fall where they might, stood looking at him: so colourless, so dishevelled. so defiant and despairing, that he was afraid of her.

'What is it? I conjure you, Louisa, tell me what is the matter.'

She dropped into a chair before him, and put her cold hand on his arm.

Pe când tunetul bubuia în depărtare și ploaia se revărsa ca un potop, ușa camerei se deschise. Privind pe după lampa așezată pe masa de lucru, văzu, cu uimire, pe fata lui cea mare.

—Louisa!

—Tată, vreau să-ți vorbesc.

—Ce s-a întâmplat? Ce aer straniu ai! Dar, pentru dumnezeu, spuse domnul Gradgrind, minunându-se din ce în ce mai tare, ai venit până aici înfruntând furtuna asta?

Louisa își pipăi rochia cu mâinile, ca și cum abia acum și-ar fi dat seama că-i udă.

—Da, răspunse ea apoi, descoperindu-și capul.

Și lăsându-și pelerina și gluga să cadă la întâmplare, rămase cu ochii ațintiți la el; era așa de palidă și de ciufulită, așa de îndârjită și de disperată, încât îl sperie.

—Ce este? Te implor, Louisa, spune-mi, ce s-a întâmplat?

Louisa căzu pe un scaun în fața lui și-i puse pe braț mâna

'Father, you have trained me from my cradle.'

'Yes, Louisa'

'I curse the hour in which I was born to such a destiny.'

He looked at her in doubt and dread, vacantly repeating, 'Curse the hour? Curse the hour?'

'How could you give me life, and take from me all the inappreciable things that raise it from the state of conscious death? Where are the graces of my soul? Where are the sentiments of my heart? What have you done, with the garden that should have bloomed once, in this great wilderness here!'

She struck herself with both her hands upon her bosom.

'If it had ever been here, its ashes alone would save me from the void in which my whole life sinks. I did not mean to say this; but, father, you remember the last time we conversed in this room?'

He had been so wholly unprepared for what he heard now, that it was with difficulty he answered, 'Yes, Louisa.'

'What has risen to my lips now, would have risen to my lips then, if you had given a moment's help. I don't reproach you, father. What you have nurtured in me, you have never nurtured in yourself; but O! if you had only done so long ago, or if you had only neglected me, what a much better and much happier creature I should have been this day!'

On hearing this, after all his care, he bowed his head upon

înghețată.

—Tată, dumneata m-ai educat din leagăn?

—Da, Louisa.

—Blestemat fie ceasul în care m-am născut pentru asemenea soartă!

El o privi cu neîncredere și spaimă, repetând buimăcit:

—Blestemat fie ceasul? Blestemat fie ceasul?

—Cum de ai putut să-mi dai viață și să-mi răpești toate lucrurile neprețuite care o fac să se ridice deasupra acelei stări ce-i asemenea unei morți conștiente? Unde sunt harurile sufletului meu? Unde sunt simțămintele inimii mele? Ah, ce-ai făcut tată, ce-ai făcut cu grădina care ar fi trebuit să înflorească de mult în pustiul nemărginit de aici? Zise ea lovindu-și pieptul cu amândouă mâinile. Dacă ar fi fost vreodată aici măcar cenușă ei, și tot m-ar fi scăpat de golul în care se scufundă întreaga mea viață! Nu voiam să spun un asemenea lucru, dar îți amintești, tată, de ultima noastră discuție din camera asta?

—Da, Louisa.

—Vorbele ce mi-au venit acum pe buze mi-ar fi venit pe buze și atunci dacă mi-ai fi întins o mână de ajutor, măcar pentru o clipă. Nu-ți fac nici o vină tată. Ceea ce n-ai cultivat niciodată în mine n-ai cultivat niciodată nici în tine. Dar, vai! Dacă măcar ai fi făcut așa atunci, ori dacă măcar nu te-ai fi ocupat de loc de mine, cu cât mai bună și mai fericită aș fi fost astăzi!

his hand and groaned aloud.

'Father, if you had known, when we were last together here, what even I feared while I strove against it—as it had been my task from infancy to strive against every natural prompting that has arisen in my heart; if you had known that there lingered in my breast, sensibilities, affections, weaknesses capable of being cherished into strength, defying all the calculations ever made by man, and no more known to his arithmetic than his Creator is,—would you have given me to the husband whom I am now sure that I hate?'

He said, 'No. No, my poor child.'

'Would you have doomed me, at any time to the frost and blight that have hardened and spoiled me? Would you have robbed me—for no one's enrichment—only for the greater desolation of this world—of the immaterial part of my life, the spring and summer of my belief, my refuge from what is sordid and bad in the real things around me, my school in which I should have learned to be more humble and more trusting with them, and to hope in my little sphere and make them better?'

'O no, no. No, Louisa.'

'Yet, father, if I had been stone blind; if I had groped my way by my sense of touch, and had been free, while I knew the shapes and surfaces of things, to exercise my fancy somewhat in regard to them; I should have been a million times wiser, happier, more

Auzind acele vorbe, după toată grija lui de a o crește, își lăsă capul pe mână și scoase un geamăt adânc.

—Tată, dacă ai fi știut atunci, ultima dată când am fost aici, că luptam împotriva unei porniri lăuntrice de care mătemeam (căci, vai, n-am făcut altceva din copilărie decât să lupt împotriva oricărui imbold firesc ce se înfiripa în mine), dacă ai fi știut că în adâncul sufletului meu lâncezeau sentimente, afecțiuni, înclinări, capabile să se prefacă într-o forță care sfidează toate calculele făcute vreodată de om și care-i tot atât de necunoscut aritmeticii lui ca însuși creatorul, dacă ai fi știut toate astea, tată, m-ai fi dat soțului pe care acum sunt sigură că îl urăsc?

El răspunse:

—Nu, biata mea copilă. Nu.

—Tot m-ai fi osândit la înghețul și ofilirea care m-au înăsprit și m-au distrus? Mi-ai fi răpit, fără a îmbogăți pe nimeni—numai pentru a mări nenorocirea lumii acesteia—acea parte imaterială a vieții mele, primăvara și vara credinței mele, refugiul meu împotriva josniciei și putreziciunii din lucrurile reale ce mă înconjoară, școala la care ar fi trebuit să învăț să fiu umilă și mai încrezătoare în oameni, nădăjduind, în cercul meu strâmt, că pot să-i fac mai buni?

—O, nu, nu! Nu, Louisa!

—Cu toate acestea, tată, să fi fost oarbă cu desăvârșire și să fi

loving, more contended, more innocent and human in all good respects, than I am with the eyes I have. […]'

(in *Hard Times* 200-2)

trebuit să-mi dibui drumul numai prin pipăit, cunoscând astfel numai formele și fețele lucrurilor, și dacă aș fi fost liberă să-mi desfășor într-un fel oarecare imaginația ca să le pricep, tot aș fi fost de un milion de ori mai înțeleaptă, mai fericită, mai iubitoare, mai mulțumită, mai nevinovată și mai omenoasă în toate privințele decât sunt acum, cu ochii pe care îi am.

[Traducere de Valeria și Teodora Sadoveanu, Editura pentru Literatură Universală, București, 1964]

From *Great Expectations*

Great Expectations is Dickens's second Bildungrsoman after *David Copperfield*. The story is represented by the development of the main hero, Philip Pirrip, commonly called Pip, from childhood to maturity. His whole existence is placed under expectations of wealth and renown. Pip is basically designed as an obviously positive character and observer of other people; but he is also the author of his own drama, as he is far from leading a faultless life. The novel is a novel of adventure and the mystery of an unknown benefactor, built upon the theme of the convict-shattered illusions (Horsman 145).

Just like in the case of many Victorian novels, money is given here a pivotal presence—it is 'the centre of the psychological and social drama, […] direct object of destruction […] [and] morally destructive' (Levine 86).

The Escaped Convict

The text below is extracted from the first chapter of the novel and represents the turning point in the life of Pip: the frightening encounter with Abel Magwitch, an escaped convict. The result of Pip's action of providing shelter and food for Magwitch is to change his whole life: the escaped convict will become the anonymous benefactor who will offer him in a noble gesture of unselfishness the financial means necessary for the boy to become a well-off gentleman.

Interesting is the perspective in which Magwitch is placed in this scene. In spite of the frightening dimensions he would like to add to himself, he emerges as a frightened creature worthy of pity; far from being the victimiser, as expected, he is a victim himself.

'Hold your noise!' cried a terrible voice, as a man started up from among the graves at the side of the church porch. 'Keep still, you little devil, or I'll cut your throat!'

—Dar mai tacă-ți gura! strigă o voce înspăimântătoare, şi un om se ridică dintre morminte, lângă uşa care dădea în biserică. Stai liniştit, diavole, că de nu, îți frâng gâtul!

A fearful man, all in coarse gray, with a great iron on his leg. A man with no hat, and with broken shoes, and with an old rag tied round his head. A man who had been soaked in water, and smothered in mud, and lamed by stones, and cut by flints, and stung by nettles, and torn by briars; who limped, and shivered, and glared, and growled; and whose teeth chattered in his head as he seized me by the chin.

'Oh! Don't cut my throat, sir,' I pleaded in terror. 'Pray don't do it, sir.'

'Tell us your name!' said the man. 'Quick!'

'Pip, sir.'

'Once more,' said the man, staring at me. 'Give it mouth!'

'Pip. Pip, sir.'

'Show us where you live,' said the man. 'Pint out the place!'

I pointed to where our village lay, on the flat in-shore among the alder-trees and *pollards, a mile or more from the church.

The man, after looking at me for a moment, turned me upside down, and emptied my pockets. There was nothing in them but a piece of bread. When the church came to itself,—for he was so sudden and strong that he made it go head over heels before me, and I saw the steeple under my feet,—when the church came to itself, I say, I was seated on a high tombstone, trembling while he ate the bread ravenously.

'You young dog,' said the man, licking his lips, 'what fat

Era o ființă înfricoşătoare: purta o haină grosolană, cenuşie, şi avea o cătuşă mare de fier la picior. Pălărie nu avea, ghetele îi erau rupte, iar la cap era legat cu o basma zdrențuită. Arăta ca un om ieşit din apă, care se târâse prin noroi şi fusese lovit şi tăiat de pietre, înțepat de urzici şi sfâşiat de mărăcini; şchiopăta, tremura, se holba la mine şi mormăia tot timpul; dinții îi clănțăneau când mă apucă de bărbie.

—Vă rog, domnule, să nu-mi frângeți gâtul, îl implorai eu, îngrozit. Vă rog frumos...

—Cum te cheamă? întrebă omul. Spune iute!

—Pip, domnule.

—Încă o dată, şi se holbă la mine. Ia zi!

—Pip. Pip, domnule.

—Unde locuieşti? Arată-mi cu degetul!

Arătai în direcția unde se întindea satul nostru, printre aninii şi plopii de pe malul neted, cam la o milă depărtare de biserică.

După ce mă privi timp de o clipă, omul mă întoarse cu capul în jos şi cu picioarele în sus şi-mi goli buzunarele. Dar, în afară de o bucată de pâine, nu găsi nimic. Când biserica se întoarse din nou în picioare—căci omul era atât de iute în mişcări şi atât de puternic, încât răsuci biserica cu susul în jos, în fața mea, şi mă făcu să văd clopotnița la picioarele mele—cum spun, când biserica se întoarse din nou în picioare, eu şedeam, tremurând, cocoțat pe o piatră înaltă de mormânt, în timp ce el înfuleca

cheeks you ha' got.'

I believe they were fat, though I was at that time undersized for my years, and not strong.

'Darn me if I couldn't eat 'em,' said the man, with a threatening shake of his head, 'and if I han't half a mind to't!'

I earnestly expressed my hope that he wouldn't, and held tighter to the tombstone on which he had put me; partly, to keep myself upon it; partly, to keep myself from crying.

'Now lookee here!' said the man. 'Where's your mother?'

'There, sir!' said I.

He started, made a short run, and stopped and looked over his shoulder.

'There, sir!' I timidly explained. 'Also Georgiana. That's my mother.'

'Oh!' said he, coming back. 'And is that your father alonger your mother?'

'Yes, sir,' said I; 'him too; *late of this parish.'

'Ha!' he muttered then, considering. 'Who d'ye live with,—supposin' you're kindly let to live, which I han't made up my mind about?'

'My sister, sir,—Mrs. Joe Gargery,—wife of Joe Gargery, the blacksmith, sir.'

'Blacksmith, eh?' said he. And looked down at his leg.

After darkly looking at his leg and me several times, he came

pâinea cu lăcomie.

—Măi puştiule, făcu omul, lingându-şi buzele, dar dolofani obraji mai ai!

Cred că, într-adevăr, aveam obraji dolofani, deşi pe atunci eram cam mititel şi nu prea voinic pentru vârsta mea.

—Să fiu al naibii dacă nu i-aş mânca! spuse omul, clătinând ameninţător din cap. Zău dacă n-aş face-o!

Îmi exprimai cu gravitate dorinţa ca acest lucru să nu se întâmple şi mă încleştai cu putere de piatra pe care mă aşezase omul, întâi ca să mă ţin mai bine, şi apoi ca nu cumva să încep să plâng.

—Ia spune-mi, făcu omul, unde ţi-e mama?

—Acolo! răspunsei eu.

Omul tresări, ca şi cum ar fi vrut s-o ia la goană, apoi se opri şi se uită în urmă.

—Acolo, explicai eu serios. „De asemenea, şi Georgiana", aia-i mama.

—A! făcu el, întorcându-se. Şi ăla de alături de ea e tat-tău?

—Da, domnule, spusei eu, chiar el. „Răposat în această parohie".

—Aha! bodogăni omul, gânditor. Şi acum tu pe lângă cine trăieşti, asta dacă cumva te mai las eu cu zile, lucru la care încă nu m-am hotărât.

—Cu soră-mea, doamna Gargery, nevasta lui Joe Gargery,

closer to my tombstone, took me by both arms, and tilted me back as far as he could hold me; so that his eyes looked most powerfully down into mine, and mine looked most helplessly up into his.

'Now lookee here,' he said, 'the question being whether you're to be let to live. You know what a *file is?'

'Yes, sir.'

'And you know what *wittles is?'

'Yes, sir.'

After each question he tilted me over a little more, so as to give me a greater sense of helplessness and danger.

'You get me a file.' He tilted me again. 'And you get me wittles.' He tilted me again. 'You bring 'em both to me.' He tilted me again. 'Or I'll have your heart and liver out.' He tilted me again.

I was dreadfully frightened, and so giddy that I clung to him with both hands, and said, 'If you would kindly please to let me keep upright, sir, perhaps I shouldn't be sick, and perhaps I could attend more.'

He gave me a most tremendous dip and roll, so that the church jumped over its own weathercock. Then, he held me by the arms, in an upright position on the top of the stone, and went on in these fearful terms:—

'You bring me, to-morrow morning early, that file and them

fierarul, domnule.

—Fierarul, aha! făcu el. Şi-şi privi piciorul.

După ce-şi plimbă de câteva ori privirea întunecată de la picior la mine, se apropie de piatra pe care şedeam eu, mă apucă de amândouă mâinile şi mă împinse îndărăt, ținându-mă cât putea mai departe de el; ochii lui mă sfredeleau, şi eu îl priveam cu deznădejde.

—Măi băiețaş, mă intreb dacă să te las cu zile. Ştii ce-i aia o pilă?

—Ştiu, domnule.

—Dar haleală ştii ce-i?

—Ştiu.

După fiecare întrebare, mă înghiontea mai tare, ca să mă facă să mă simt mai slab şi ca să mă înfricoşeze mai rău.

—Ai să-mi aduci o pilă. Mă smuci din nou: Şi ai să-mi aduci haleală. Şi iar mă smuci: Să mi le aduci pe amândouă. Dacă nu, îți scot măruntaiele! şi mă mai zgâlțâi puțin.

Eram atât de îngrozit şi de amețit, încât mă agățai de el cu amândouă mâinile.

—Dac-ați fi atât de bun şi m-ați lăsa să stau drept, domle, poate că n-aş mai fi atât de amețit şi aş înțelege mai bine, îndrăznii eu.

Îmi dădu un ghiont zdravăn, mă răsuci din nou, şi biserica sări iarăşi deasupra moriştii de vânt din vârf. Apoi mă ținu în

wittles. You bring the lot to me, at that old Battery over yonder. You do it, and you never dare to say a word or dare to make a sign concerning your having seen such a person as me, or any person *sumever, and you shall be let to live. You fail, or you go from my words in any partickler, no matter how small it is, and your heart and your liver shall be tore out, roasted, and ate. Now, I ain't alone, as you may think I am. There's a young man hid with me, in comparison with which young man I am a Angel. That young man hears the words I speak. That young man has a secret way *pecooliar to himself, of getting at a boy, and at his heart, and at his liver. It is in wain for a boy to attempt to hide himself from that young man. A boy may lock his door, may be warm in bed, may tuck himself up, may draw the clothes over his head, may think himself comfortable and safe, but that young man will softly creep and creep his way to him and tear him open. I am a keeping that young man from harming of you at the present moment, with great difficulty. I find it very hard to hold that young man off of your inside. Now, what do you say?'

I said that I would get him the file, and I would get him what broken bits of food I could, and I would come to him at the Battery, early in the morning.

'Say Lord strike you dead if you don't!' said the man.

I said so, and he took me down.

poziție de drepți, pe vârful pietrei de mormânt, şi îmi spuse aceste cuvinte înspăimântătoare:

—Mâine, dis-de-dimineață, ai să-mi aduci pila şi ceva haleală. Mi le aduci la fortificații, vezi? Colo! Aşa ai să faci, şi nu cumva să îndrăzneşti să sufli o vorbă sau să faci un semn cum că ai văzut pe unul ca mine sau pe oricine. În felul ăsta, poate te las cu zile. Dacă-ți dai în petic şi sufli măcar o vorbuliță, cât o fi ea de mică, îți scot inima şi ficații şi-i mănânc fripți. Acu să ştii că eu nu-s singur cum ți-ei fi închipuind tu. Mai e un băiat ascuns cu mine. Doamne, ce om! Pe lângă el, eu sunt un înger! Băiatul ăsta aude tot ce spun eu acum. Face el ce face cu puştii şi le scoate inima şi ficații. Degeaba încerci să te ascunzi de el. Poți să zăvoreşti uşa, să te ascunzi în pat, să te ghemuieşti, să-ți tragi aşternutul peste cap, dar când ți-e lumea mai dragă şi crezi c-ai scăpat de el, se furişează băiatul, îți spintecă burta şi-ți scoate măruntaiele. Acu, să ştii că abia-abia îl țin în frâu ca să nu se repeadă la tine. Cu greu îl țin, că el vrea morțiş să-ți scoată măruntaiele. Ei, ce spui?

I-am spus că am să-i aduc pila şi ce-oi găsi de-ale gurii, şi că a doua zi, dis-de-dimineață, o să vin cu lucrurile la fortificații.

—Spune: Să mă trăsnească Dumnezeu de n-oi face aşa! se răsti omul.

Am spus după el, şi omul m-a dat jos de pe piatră.

—Şi acu, mai spuse el, să te ții de făgăduială şi să nu uiți de

'Now,' he pursued, 'you remember what you've undertook, and you remember that young man, and you get home!'

'Goo-good night, sir,' I faltered.

'Much of that!' said he, glancing about him over the cold wet flat. 'I wish I was a frog. Or a *eel!'

At the same time, he hugged his shuddering body in both his arms,—clasping himself, as if to hold himself together,—and limped towards the low church wall. As I saw him go, picking his way among the nettles, and among the brambles that bound the green mounds, he looked in my young eyes as if he were eluding the hands of the dead people, stretching up cautiously out of their graves, to get a twist upon his ankle and pull him in.

When he came to the low church wall, he got over it, like a man whose legs were numbed and stiff, and then turned round to look for me. When I saw him turning, I set my face towards home, and made the best use of my legs. But presently I looked over my shoulder, and saw him going on again towards the river, still hugging himself in both arms, and picking his way with his sore feet among the great stones dropped into the marshes here and there, for stepping-places when the rains were heavy or the tide was in.

The marshes were just a long black horizontal line then, as I stopped to look after him; and the river was just another horizontal line, not nearly so broad nor yet so black; and the sky

băiatul ăla. Cară-te acasă!

—Bună seara, domle, am bâiguit eu.

—N-ar strica să fie bună, spuse el, aruncând o privire în jurul lui, peste câmpia rece şi umedă. Mai bine aş fi broască sau ţipar!

Şi omul îşi încrucişă braţele, cuprinzându-şi trupul, care tremura; se strânse de parcă i-ar fi fost teamă să nu se desfacă în două bucăţi şi o porni, şontâc-şontâc, spre zidul jos al bisericii. Mă uitam după el cum îşi croia drum printre urzicile şi mărăcinii care creşteau în jurul moviliţelor, şi ochilor mei de copil li se părea că omul dă la o parte mâinile morţilor, care se întindeau încet din morminte ca să-l prindă de gleznă şi să-l tragă înăuntru.

Când ajunse la zidul jos al bisericii, îl sări cu picioarele lui amorţite şi ţepene, apoi se întoarse după mine. Când îl văzui întorcându-se, mă îndreptai cu faţă spre casă şi o luai la sănătoasa. Dar, după câteva clipe mă uitai în urmă şi-l văzui înaintând spre fluviu, strângându-şi trupul cu mâinile ca şi mai înainte şi călcând cu picioarele lui julite pe pietroaiele presărate prin mlaştini, ca să se folosească trecătorii de ele când începeau ploile mari, sau în timpul fluxului.

În timp ce stăteam şi mă uitam după el, bălţile mi se păreau întocmai ca o dungă neagră şi dreaptă, fluviul—o altă dungă orizontală, mai îngustă şi mai luminoasă decât aceea a bălţilor, iar cerul—o ţesătură de dunguliţe dese şi mişcătoare, roşii şi

was just a row of long angry red lines and dense black lines intermixed. On the edge of the river I could faintly make out the only two black things in all the prospect that seemed to be standing upright; one of these was the *beacon by which the sailors steered,—like an *unhooped *cask upon a pole,—an ugly thing when you were near it; the other, a *gibbet, with some chains hanging to it which had once held a pirate. The man was limping on towards this latter, as if he were the pirate come to life, and come down, and going back to hook himself up again. It gave me a terrible turn when I thought so; and as I saw the cattle lifting their heads to gaze after him, I wondered whether they thought so too. I looked all round for the horrible young man, and could see no signs of him. But now I was frightened again, and ran home without stopping.

(in *Great Expectations* 4-7)

negre. Izbutii cu greu să desluşesc, la malul fluviului, singurele două lucruri negre din tot peisajul, care păreau că stau în picioare: unul din ele era farul, care folosea marinarilor la cârmit: semăna cu un butoi fără doage, în vârful unei prăjini, şi arăta urât când îl vedeai de aproape; celălalt era o spânzurătoare cu nişte lanțuri agățate de ea; acolo atârnase nu demult un pirat. Omul se îndrepta şchiopătând spre spânzurătoare, ca şi cum ar fi fost însuşi piratul, care ar fi înviat şi ar fi coborât din ştreang, iar acum s-ar fi dus să se spânzure din nou. Gândul acesta îmi dădu fiori. Şi când văzui că vitele din cireadă îşi înalță capetele şi se uită după el, mă întrebai dacă nu cumva se gândesc şi ele la acelaşi lucru. Mă uitai în jurul meu, ca să-l văd pe băiatul cel înfricoşător, dar nu se vedea nici țipenie de om. Mă cuprinse iarăşi frica şi am început a goni din nou spre casă, fără să mă mai opresc.

[Traducere de Vera Călin, Editura pentru Literatură, București, 1969]

Miss Havisham

Miss Havisham is an extravagant character who, after having been abandoned by the man she wanted to marry on the very day of her wedding, decided never to see light again and seclude herself in her strange house, reminiscent in an almost grotesque way of the ghosts and haunted castles of Gothic tales.

The fragment below contains Pip's impressions when he was first introduced to Miss Havisham's house to play with Estella, Miss Havisham's pupil and creation, educated as a means to crush men's hearts.

In an arm-chair, with an elbow resting on the table and her head leaning on that hand, sat the strangest lady I have ever seen, or shall ever see.

She was dressed in rich materials—satins, and lace, and silks—all of white. Her shoes were white. And she had a long white veil dependent from her hair, and she had bridal flowers in her hair, but her hair was white. Some bright jewels sparkled on her neck and on her hands, and some other jewels lay sparkling on the table. Dresses, less splendid than the dress she wore, and half-packed trunks, were scattered about. She had not quite finished dressing, for she had but one shoe on—the other was on the table near her hand—her veil was but half arranged, her watch and chain were not put on, and some lace for her bosom lay with those trinkets, and with her handkerchief, and

Şedea într-un fotoliu cu cotul sprijinit de masă şi cu capul în mână; era cea mai stranie făptură pe care o văzusem până atunci sau pe care o voi vedea vreodată.

Era îmbrăcată în stofe bogate—în atlaz, mătase şi dantele. Tot ce purta pe ea era alb. Şi pantofii ei tot albi erau. Un val alb şi lung îi acoperea capul, şi-n păr avea flori de lămâiță, iar părul îi era tot alb. Pe gât şi pe mâini sclipeau giuvaeruri scânteietoare, şi pe masă scânteiau altele. Prin toată odaia erau împrăştiate rochii—nu chiar atât de minunate ca aceea pe care o purta—şi cufere pe jumătate pline. Pesemne că nu sfârşise încă cu îmbrăcatul, fiindcă n-avea decât un singur pantof în picior: celălalt era pe masă, alături de mâna ei; vălul nu era bine potrivit, ceasul cu lanț nu şi-l pusese încă, iar alături de giuvaerurile de pe masă se vedeau nişte dantele, care trebuiau

gloves, and some flowers, and a prayer-book, all confusedly heaped about the looking-glass.

It was not in the first few moments that I saw all these things, though I saw more of them in the first moments than might be supposed. But, I saw that everything within my view which ought to be white, had been white long ago, and had lost its lustre, and was faded and yellow. I saw that the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress, and like the flowers, and had no brightness left but the brightness of her sunken eyes. I saw that the dress had been put upon the rounded figure of a young woman, and that the figure upon which it now hung loose, had shrunk to skin and bone. Once, I had been taken to see some ghastly waxwork at the Fair, representing I know not what impossible personage lying in state. Once, I had been taken to one of our old marsh churches to see a skeleton in the ashes of a rich dress, that had been dug out of a vault under the church pavement. Now, waxwork and skeleton seemed to have dark eyes that moved and looked at me. I should have cried out, if I could.

(in *Great Expectations* 56-7)

să-i împodobească rochia, o carte de rugăciuni, o batistă, nişte mănuşi şi câteva flori, toate îngrămădite dezordonat lângă oglindă.

Toate acestea nu le-am văzut de la început, deşi, din primele clipe, am văzut mai mult decât îşi poate cineva închipui. Dar văzui că tot ceea ce ar fi trebuit să fie alb în jurul meu fusese alb odată, demult, şi îşi pierduse strălucirea, iar acum era ofilit şi galben. Văzui că mireasa, îmbrăcată de nuntă, se ofilise şi ea, ca şi rochia, ca şi florile, şi că singura strălucire care îi mai rămăsese era strălucirea ochilor ei duşi în fundul capului. Văzui că rochia fusese pusă o dată pe trupul împlinit al unei femei tinere, şi că acest trup, pe care acum toate atârnau, se chircise pînă nu mai rămăsese decât pielea şi oasele. Mi-amintesc că, o dată, la târg, am văzut nişte figuri de ceară, îngrozitoare, înfățişând nu ştiu ce personaj închipuit care îşi dădea sufletul, înconjurat de mare alai. Altă dată m-au luat la una din vechile biserici din țara mlaştinilor, ca să văd nişte moaşte îmbrăcate într-o pulbere de veşminte bogate, care tocmai fuseseră dezgropate dintr-un cavou al bisericii. Acum figura de ceară şi moaştele păreau însuflețite de nişte ochi negri, care se mişcau şi se uitau la mine. Aş fi țipat, dac-aş fi îndrăznit.

[Traducere de Vera Călin, Editura pentru Literatură, București, 1969]

I've Made a Gentleman on You

Pip's aspirations of becoming a gentleman come true one day when his expectations of wealth turn into reality due to an unknown benefactor. He is now able to leave his village and go to London to fulfil his dreams. Pip has always believed Miss Havisham to be his sponsor but, to Pip's disappointment, this mysterious sponsor proves to be the escaped convict Abel Magwitch whom Pip, as a boy, rendered service by giving him food and shelter, allowing him thus to escape his pursuers. The extract bellow is the pathetic scene when Abel Magwitch reveals himself to be Pip's benefactor. Touching in Magwitch's revelation is his good-will and fatherly concern.

'Yes, Pip, dear boy, I've made a gentleman on you! It's me *wot has done it! I swore that time, sure as ever I earned a guinea, that guinea should go to you. I swore *arterwards, sure as ever I spec'lated and got rich, you should get rich. I lived rough, that you should live smooth; I worked hard, that you should be above work. What odds, dear boy? Do I tell it, fur you to feel a obligation? Not a bit. I tell it, fur you to know as that there hunted dunghill dog wot you kep life in, got his head so high that he could make a gentleman,—and, Pip, you're him!'

The abhorrence in which I held the man, the dread I had of him, the repugnance with which I shrank from him, could not have been exceeded if he had been some terrible beast.

'Look'ee here, Pip. I'm your second father. You're my son,—more to me nor any son. I've put away money, only for you to

—Da, Pip, băiete, am făcut din tine un gentleman! Eu am făcut asta! Am jurat atunci că dacă vreodată am să agonisesc vreun ban, banul ăla să fie al tău. Am jurat pe urmă că dacă vreodată am să fac afaceri şi am să mă îmbogățesc, tu să fii om bogat. Am dus un trai greu ca ție să-ți fie viața uşoară; am muncit din greu ca ție să nu-ți pese de muncă. Ce te supără, băiete? Îți spun eu să te simți îndatorat față de mine? Nici gând! Îți spun toate astea ca să ştii că amărâtul ăla de câine pe care l-ai scăpat şi-a ridicat capul aşa de sus, încât a fost în stare să crească un gentleman, şi, Pip, ăla eşti tu!

Sila pe care o simțeam față de omul acesta, teama pe care mi-o trezea, scârba cu care mă chirceam de frica lui n-ar fi putut să fie mai mari nici dacă ar fi fost cea mai crudă fiară.

—Vezi, Pip? Eu sunt pentru tine un al doilea tată. Tu mi-eşti

spend. When I was a hired-out shepherd in a solitary hut, not seeing no faces but faces of sheep till I half forgot wot men's and women's faces *wos like, I see *yourn. I drops my knife many a time in that hut when I was a-eating my dinner or my supper, and I says, 'Here's the boy again, a looking at me whiles I eats and drinks!' I see you there a many times, as plain as ever I see you on them misty marshes. 'Lord strike me dead!' I says each time,—and I goes out in the air to say it under the open heavens,—but wot, if I gets liberty and money, I'll make that boy a gentleman!' And I done it. Why, look at you, dear boy! Look at these here lodgings o'yourn, fit for a lord! A lord? Ah! You shall show money with lords for wagers, and beat 'em!'

In his heat and triumph, and in his knowledge that I had been nearly fainting, he did not remark on my reception of all this. It was the one grain of relief I had.

'Look'ee here!' he went on, taking my watch out of my pocket, and turning towards him a ring on my finger, while I recoiled from his touch as if he had been a snake, 'a gold 'un and a beauty: that's a gentleman's, I hope! A diamond all set round with rubies; that's a gentleman's, I hope! Look at your linen; fine and beautiful! Look at your clothes; better *ain't to be got! And your books too,' turning his eyes round the room, 'mounting up, on their shelves, by hundreds! And you read 'em; don't you? I see you'd been a reading of 'em when I come in. Ha, ha, ha!

fiu; mai fiu decît oricare fiu! Am agonisit bani numai ca să ai tu ce cheltui. Când eram păstor cu simbrie într-o cocioabă uitată de lume şi nu vedeam alte ființe vii decât oile, până am şi uitat cum arată o față de om, vedeam mereu chipul tău înainte ochilor. De multe ori când mâncam în cocioaba aia, îmi aruncam cuțitul în pământ şi-mi spuneam: „Şi acum se uită băiatul la mine, în timp ce mănânc şi beau!" Te vedeam cum erai atunci, în mlaştinile înfundate în ceață. „Să mă bată Dumnezeu", spuneam într-una, şi ieşeam afară la aer, ca să spun vorbele astea sub cerul liber, „să mă bată Dumnezeu dacă nu fac un gentleman din băiatul ăsta când oi fi liber şi bogat!" Şi am făcut-o! Uită-te la mine, băiete! Uită-te la casa asta de boier! Boier? Ei! Să faci rămăşaguri pe bani cu boierii şi să-i bați!

Era atât de înfierbântat şi de triumfător şi apoi ştia că-mi pierdusem aproape cunoştința, aşa încât nici nu se uita la felul cum primeam spusele lui. Era singura fărâmă de uşurare care-mi mai rămânea.

—Uită-te! urmă el, scoțându-mi ceasornicul din buzunar şi răsucind spre el un inel de pe degetul meu, în timp ce eu mă strângeam, ca şi cum m-ar fi atins un şarpe, e de aur! Şi ce frumos e! E un ceas de gentleman, nu-i aşa? Şi un diamant înconjurat de rubine; şi ăsta-i de gentleman, nu? Uită-te la rufăria ta: aleasă şi frumoasă! Uită-te la hainele tale; nici nu se găsesc mai bune! Şi cărți, spuse el, plimbându-şi privirile prin odaie, cărți cu sutele,

You shall read 'em to me, dear boy! And if they're in foreign languages wot I don't understand, I shall be just as proud as if I did.'

Again he took both my hands and put them to his lips, while my blood ran cold within me.

'Don't you mind talking, Pip,' said he, after again drawing his sleeve over his eyes and forehead, as the click came in his throat which I well remembered,—and he was all the more horrible to me that he was so much in earnest; 'you can't do better nor keep quiet, dear boy. You ain't looked slowly forward to this as I have; you wosn't prepared for this as I wos. But didn't you never think it might be me?'

'O no, no, no,' I returned, 'Never, never!'

'Well, you see it wos me, and single-handed. Never a soul in it but my own self and Mr. Jaggers.'

'Was there no one else?' I asked.

'No,' said he, with a glance of surprise: 'who else should there be? And, dear boy, how good looking you have growed! There's bright eyes somewheres—eh? Isn't there bright eyes somewheres, wot you love the thoughts on?'

O Estella, Estella!

'They shall be yourn, dear boy, if money can buy 'em. Not that a gentleman like you, so well set up as you, can't win 'em off of his own game; but money shall back you! Let me finish

pe rafturi! Şi le citeşti, nu-i aşa? Citeai şi când am intrat eu. Ha, ha! Ai să mi le citeşti şi mie, băiete! Şi dacă-s scrise in limbi străine, pe care eu nu le înțeleg, o să mă mândresc ca şi cum aş înțelege fiecare vorbă!

Şi iarăşi îmi luă mâinile şi le duse la gură, în timp ce mie îmi îngheța sângele în vine.

—Nu te supăra că vorbesc atâta, Pip, spuse el după ce-şi trase din nou mâneca peste ochi şi peste frunte, în timp ce din gâtlej i se auzea hârâiala aceea pe care o cunoşteam atât de bine; şi tocmai fiindcă era atât de grav mi-era silă de el. Nu pot să mă port altfel şi nici să tac, băiete... Tu n-ai aşteptat ziua asta aşa cum am aşteptat-o eu; nu te-ai pregătit pentru ea aşa ca mine. Dar nu te-ai gândit niciodată că s-ar putea să fiu eu?

—O, nu, nu! răspunsei eu. Niciodată, niciodată!

—Vezi, eu eram, eu, şi nimeni altul! Nimeni nu s-a amestecat in treaba asta decât eu şi cu domnul Jaggers.

—Nimeni altcineva? întrebai eu.

—Nu, spuse el, cu o privire mirată; cine să se fi amestecat? Şi ce frumos te-ai făcut, măi băiete! Ei, or fi nişte ochi frumoşi pe undeva, aşa-i? Nu se află nişte ochi frumoşi pe undeva la care tu te gândeşti cu drag?

O, Estella, Estella!

—Ai tăi să fie, băiete, dacă-i poți cumpăra cu bani! Nu că un gentleman aşa învățat ca tine nu i-ar putea câştiga şi fără bani,

wot I was a telling you, dear boy. From that there hut and that there *hiring-out, I got money left me by my master (which died, and had been the same as me), and got my liberty and went for myself. In every single thing I went for, I went for you. 'Lord strike a blight upon it,' I says, wotever it was I went for, 'if it ain't for him!' It all prospered wonderful. As I giv' you to understand just now, I'm famous for it. It was the money left me, and the gains of the first few year wot I sent home to Mr. Jaggers—all for you—when he first come *arter you, agreeable to my letter.'

O that he had never come! That he had left me at the forge,—far from contented, yet, by comparison happy!

'And then, dear boy, it was a recompense to me, look'ee here, to know in secret that I was making a gentleman. The blood horses of them colonists might fling up the dust over me as I was walking; what do I say? I says to myself, 'I'm making a better gentleman nor ever you'll be!' When one of 'em says to another, 'He was a convict, a few year ago, and is a ignorant common fellow now, for all he's lucky,' what do I say? I says to myself, 'If I ain't a gentleman, nor yet ain't got no learning, I'm the owner of such. All on you owns stock and land; which on you owns a brought-up London gentleman?' This way I kep myself a going. And this way I held steady afore my mind that I would for certain come one day and see my boy, and make

dar o să ai bani berechet! Lasă-mă să-ți spun tot ce voiam să-ți spun, măi băiete. Când eram păstor cu simbrie în coliba aceea, stăpânul meu a murit (era şi el tot ocnaş, ca şi mine) şi mi-a lăsat mie banii lui, şi eu mi-am răscumpărat libertatea şi mi-am văzut de treaba mea. Tot ce făceam, pentru tine făceam. „Dumnezeu să ardă tot ce fac, ziceam, dacă nu fac totul pentru el!" Şi totul mi-a mers de minune. Cum ți-am spus şi adineauri, mi-a mers faima! Banii pe care i-am trimis acasă la domnul Jaggers erau câştigul din primul an—pe tot ți l-am trimis!—ştii, atunci când a venit după tine, aşa cum i-am scris eu în scrisoare.

O, de n-ar fi venit niciodată! De m-ar fi lăsat în fierărie, unde, departe de a fi fericit, eram totuşi mai mulțumit decât mă simțeam acum!

—Şi ce răsplată pentru mine, măi băiete, să ştiu în sufletul meu că eu cresc un gentleman! Caii cei frumoşi ai coloniştilor puteau să mă umple de praf când umblam pe drum; ştii ce spuneam? Îmi spuneam în gândul meu: „Eu cresc un gentleman mai de soi decât o să fiți voi vreodată!" Când îşi spuneau unul altuia: „Acum câțiva ani era puşcăriaş, şi nu-i decât un bădăran de rând şi un neştiutor, deşi a avut noroc", ştii ce-mi spuneam? Îmi spuneam în gândul meu: „Dacă eu nu-s gentleman şi nici carte nu ştiu, apoi să ştiți că am în Londra un gentleman! Voi toți aveți turme şi pământ, dar care din voi are un gentleman crescut la Londra?" Şi aşa mergea treaba. Şi aşa mi-am băgat în cap să vin,

myself known to him, on his own ground.'

He laid his hand on my shoulder. I shuddered at the thought that for anything I knew, his hand might be stained with blood.

'It *warn't easy, Pip, for me to leave them parts, nor yet it warn't safe. But I held to it, and the harder it was, the stronger I held, for I was determined, and my mind firm made up. At last I done it. Dear boy, I done it!'

(in *Great Expectations* 315-7)

într-o bună zi, să-mi văd băiatul şi să-i spun cine sunt, chiar în casa lui!

Îşi puse o mână pe umărul meu. Mă cutremuram la gândul că mâna lui ar fi putut fi pătată de sânge.

—N-a fost uşor pentru mine, măi Pip, să plec de acolo, şi nici fără primejdie. Dar mă țineam de gândul ăsta şi, cu cât era mai greu, cu atât mai tare mă agățam de el, fiindcă eram hotărât să vin, şi nici nu mai încăpea vorbă că aşa o să fie. Şi, până la urmă, tot am făcut-o. Am făcut-o, dragă băiete!

[Traducere de Vera Călin, Editura pentru Literatură, București, 1969]

Estella

As pointed out in the introduction to the Victorian novel, happy endings were no longer common practice during the age, though many readers and publishers wished to read such endings in their novels. This is the case of this novel too which, in its initial edition, ended on a pessimistic note that seemed to suggest that Pip and Estella were not to be reunited. In the revised edition, Dickens included another ending, probably to make his story more acceptable, in which, at least formally, a reunion of the two was hinted at as possible. However, as Cardwel suggests (503), both endings are quite equivocal or ambiguous and left to the interpretation of the readers. The two texts below reproduce the novel's two endings.

[First ending] It was four years more before I saw herself [Estella]. I had heard of her as leading a most unhappy life, and as being separated form her husband who had used her with great cruelty and who had become quite renowned as a compound of pride, brutality and meanness. I had heart of the death of her husband (from an accident consequent of his ill-treating of a horse), and of her being married again to a Shropshire doctor, who, against his interest had once very manfully interposed, on an occasion when he was in professional attendance on Mr. Drummle, and had witnessed some outrageous treatment of her. I had heard that the Shropshire doctor was not rich, and that they lived on her own personal fortune.

I was in England again—in London, and walking along Piccadilly with little Pip—when a servant came running after me to ask would I step back to a lady in a carriage who wished to speak to me. It was a little pony carriage, which the lady was driving, and the lady and I looked sadly enough on one another.

'I am greatly changed, I know; but I thought you would like to shake hands with Estella too, Pip. Lift up that pretty child and let me kiss it!' (She supposed the child, I think, to be my child.)

I was very glad afterwards to have had the interview; for, in her face and in her voice, and in her touch she gave me the assurance, that suffering had been stronger than Miss Havisham's teaching, and had given her a heart to understand what my heart used to be.

(in *Great Expectations* 481-2)

Estella

[Revised ending] I had heard of her [Estella] as leading a most unhappy life, and as being separated from her husband, who had used her with great cruelty, and who had become quite renowned as a compound of pride, avarice, brutality, and meanness. And I had heard of the death of her husband, from an accident consequent on his ill-treatment of a horse. This release had befallen her some two years before; for anything I knew, she was married again.

The early dinner hour at Joe's, left me abundance of time, without hurrying my talk with Biddy, to walk over to the old spot before dark. But, what with loitering on the way to look at old objects and to think of old times, the day had quite declined when I came to the place.

There was no house now, no brewery, no building whatever left, but the wall of the old garden. The cleared space had been enclosed with a rough fence, and looking over it, I saw that some of the old ivy had struck root anew, and was growing green on low quiet mounds of ruin. A gate in the fence standing ajar, I pushed it open, and went in.

A cold silvery mist had veiled the afternoon, and the moon was not yet up to scatter it. But, the stars were shining beyond

Auzisem că duce o viață nenorocită, că se despărțise de soțul ei, care se purtase ca un netrebnic cu ea și căruia îi mersese faima de mândru, zgârcit, brutal și josnic ce era. Și mai auzisem și de moartea soțului ei, în urma unui accident pricinuit de un cal pe care-l chinuia. Și așa, cu doi ani în urmă, Estella fusese eliberată; după câte știam eu, se căsătorise din nou.

La Joe masa se lua devreme, ceea ce îmi lăsă timp destul să stau liniștit de vorbă cu Biddy și apoi să pornesc într-acolo înainte de a se întuneca. Dar fiindcă umblam și mă uitam la lucrurile vechi din jurul meu, gândindu-mă la vremurile de odinioară, ajunsei acolo după apusul soarelui.

Nu se mai vedea nici urmă de casă sau de fabrică de bere, nici urmă de clădire, ci doar zidul vechii grădini. Locul gol fusese înconjurat de un gard grosolan și, uitându-mă peste gard, văzui că o parte din iederă prinsese din nou rădăcini și creștea verde pe deasupra grămezii de ruini. Văzui o poartă întredeschisă, pe care o împinsei și intrai.

O ceață argintie învăluise toată după-amiaza aceea, și luna încă nu răsărise ca să o împrăștie. Dar, dincolo de ceață, sclipeau stelele și luna se apropia, iar noaptea nu era întunecoasă. Îmi dădeam seama de locul unde se ridicau pe vremuri casa, fabrica

the mist, and the moon was coming, and the evening was not dark. I could trace out where every part of the old house had been, and where the brewery had been, and where the gates, and where the casks. I had done so, and was looking along the desolate garden walk, when I beheld a solitary figure in it.

The figure showed itself aware of me, as I advanced. It had been moving towards me, but it stood still. As I drew nearer, I saw it to be the figure of a woman. As I drew nearer yet, it was about to turn away, when it stopped, and let me come up with it. Then, it faltered, as if much surprised, and uttered my name, and I cried out,—

'Estella!'

'I am greatly changed. I wonder you know me.'

The freshness of her beauty was indeed gone, but its indescribable majesty and its indescribable charm remained. Those attractions in it, I had seen before; what I had never seen before, was the saddened, softened light of the once proud eyes; what I had never felt before was the friendly touch of the once insensible hand.

We sat down on a bench that was near, and I said, 'After so many years, it is strange that we should thus meet again, Estella, here where our first meeting was! Do you often come back?'

'I have never been here since.'

'Nor I.'

de bere, porțile, recunoșteam locul unde stăteau butoiele. Așezasem fiecare lucru la locul lui, și acum mă uitam spre poteca grădinii intrate în paragină, când privirea îmi fu izbită de o umbră singuratică.

Umbra părea că mă văzuse în timp ce înaintam spre ea. Parcă se îndreptase spre mine, dar acum se oprise. Când mă apropiai, văzui că este o femeie. Și când mă apropiai și mai mult, umbra se pregăti să se întoarcă, când deodată se opri și mă lăsă să vin sprea ea. Apoi umbra șovăi, parcă de mirare, și rosti numele meu, iar eu strigai:

—Estella!

—M-am schimbat mult. Mă mir că mă recunoști.

Într-adevăr, frumusețea ei proaspătă se stinsese, dar măreția aceea de nedescris, farmecul acela de neînchipuit rămăseseră. Toate acestea le cunoșteam dinainte: ceea ce nu văzusem niciodată era lumina tristă și blândă din ochii aceia atât de trufași odinioară; ceea ce nu simțisem niciodată până atunci era atingerea prietenească a acelei mâini care pe vremuri era atât de rece.

Ne-am așezat pe o bancă din apropiere și eu am spus:

—E ciudat ca, după atâția ani, să ne întâlnim aici, unde ne-am văzut pentru prima oară! Vii des pe aici?

—N-am mai fost niciodată de atunci.

—Nici eu.

The moon began to rise, and I thought of the placid look at the white ceiling, which had passed away. The moon began to rise, and I thought of the pressure on my hand when I had spoken the last words he had heard on earth.

Estella was the next to break the silence that ensued between us.

'I have very often hoped and intended to come back, but have been prevented by many circumstances. Poor, poor old place!'

The silvery mist was touched with the first rays of the moonlight, and the same rays touched the tears that dropped from her eyes. Not knowing that I saw them, and setting herself to get the better of them, she said quietly,—

'Were you wondering, as you walked along, how it came to be left in this condition?'

'Yes, Estella.'

'The ground belongs to me. It is the only possession I have not relinquished. Everything else has gone from me, little by little, but I have kept this. It was the subject of the only determined resistance I made in all the wretched years.'

'Is it to be built on?'

'At last, it is. I came here to take leave of it before its change. And you,' she said, in a voice of touching interest to a wanderer,—you live abroad still?'

'Still.'

Luna răsărise, și eu mă gândeam la privirea aceea lipsită de expresie îndreptată spre tavanul alb, la privirea aceea care se stinsese. Luna răsărise, și eu mă gândeam la strângerea aceea de mână când eu îi spusesem ultimele cuvinte pe care îi era dat să le audă în lumea asta.

Estella rupse tăcerea care se lăsase între noi.

—De multe ori am dorit, am nădăjduit să mă întorc, dar am fost împiedicată de atâtea împrejurări. Sărmane locuri!

Primele raze ale lunii străbăteau ceața argintie și tot razele acelea atinseră lacrimile care cădeau din ochii ei. Fără să știe că le văzusem și încercând să le ascundă, îmi spuse cu glas liniștit:

—Nu te-ai întrebat, când ai trecut pe aici, cum s-a întâmplat că a rămas totul în starea asta?

—Ba da, Estella.

—Terenul îmi aparține mie. E singura avere de care n-am vrut să mă despart. Restul s-a dus totul, încetul cu încetul, dar pământul ăsta l-am păstrat. A fost singurul lucru la care m-am împotrivit cu înverșunare în toți anii aceștia amărâți.

—Se va clădi ceva pe locul acesta?

—Până la urmă, cred că da. Am venit aici să-mi iau rămas bun de la el înainte de a se schimba. Și tu, spuse ea, cu o voce în stare să miște sufletul unui drumeț rătăcitor, tot în străinătate locuiești?

—Tot.

'And do well, I am sure?'

'I work pretty hard for a sufficient living, and therefore—yes, I do well.'

'I have often thought of you,' said Estella.

'Have you?'

'Of late, very often. There was a long hard time when I kept far from me the remembrance of what I had thrown away when I was quite ignorant of its worth. But since my duty has not been incompatible with the admission of that remembrance, I have given it a place in my heart.'

'You have always held your place in my heart,' I answered.

And we were silent again until she spoke.

'I little thought,' said Estella, 'that I should take leave of you in taking leave of this spot. I am very glad to do so.'

'Glad to part again, Estella? To me, parting is a painful thing. To me, the remembrance of our last parting has been ever mournful and painful.'

'But you said to me,' returned Estella, very earnestly,"God bless you, God forgive you!' And if you could say that to me then, you will not hesitate to say that to me now,—now, when suffering has been stronger than all other teaching, and has taught me to understand what your heart used to be. I have been bent and broken, but—I hope—into a better shape. Be as considerate and good to me as you were, and tell me we are

—Sunt sigură că-ți merge bine.

—Lucrez destul de greu ca să-mi asigur o viață îndestulată, prin urmare cred că da, îmi merge bine!

—M-am gândit de multe ori la tine, spuse Estella.

—Adevărat?

—În ultimul timp, foarte des. A fost un timp îndelungat când alungam orice amintire despre ceea ce îndepărtasem în vremea când nu-mi dădeam seama de prețul acestor amintiri. Dar de când datoria nu mă mai împiedică să mă aplec mereu asupra acestor gânduri, le-am făcut loc în inima mea.

—Tu ai avut întotdeauna un loc în inima mea, spusei eu.

Și apoi tăcurăm din nou, până ce Estella vorbi:

—Nu m-aș fi gândit, spuse ea, că, o dată cu locurile acestea, îmi voi lua rămas bun și de la tine. Îmi pare bine că s-a întâmplat așa.

—Ești mulțumită că ne despărțim din nou, Estella? Pentru mine o despărțire e ceva dureros. Pentru mine amintirea ultimei noastre despărțiri a fost jalnică și dureroasă.

—Dar atunci mi-ai spus: „Dumnezeu să te binecuvânteze. Dumnezeu să te ierte!" răspunse Estella cu glas grav. Și dacă atunci ai putut să-mi spui așa, n-ai să stai la îndoială să-mi spui și acum, acum, când o suferință mai puternică decât orice învățătură m-a făcut să-ți înțeleg sentimentele. Am fost îndoită și frântă, dar nădăjduiesc că asta s-a întâmplat pentru a mă

friends.'

'We are friends,' said I, rising and bending over her, as she rose from the bench.

'And will continue friends apart,' said Estella.

I took her hand in mine, and we went out of the ruined place; and, as the morning mists had risen long ago when I first left the forge, so the evening mists were rising now, and in all the broad expanse of tranquil light they showed to me, I saw no shadow of another parting from her.

(in *Great Expectations* 476-9)

preface într-o ființă mai bună. Fii îngăduitor și bun cu mine, așa cum ai mai fost, și spune-mi că suntem prieteni.

—Suntem prieteni, spusei eu, ridicându-mă și înclinându-mă spre ea, în timp ce și ea se sculă de pe bancă.

—Și vom fi mereu prieteni chiar și la depărtare, spuse Estella...

I-am luat mâna în mâna mea și am plecat împreună din locurile acelea părăginite; și așa cum ceața dimineții se ridicase odată, demult, când plecasem pentru prima oară de la fierărie, tot așa acum, ceața serii se ridica, și în lumina blândă, a cărei întindere nesfârșită mi se dezvălui, nu văzui nici o umbră care să-mi vorbească de o notă de despărțire.

[Traducere de Vera Călin, Editura pentru Literatură, București, 1969]

From *Bleak House*

Bleak House is a novel where Dickens depicts a sombre picture of contemporary society, an angry satire on the abuses of the old court of Chancery. Unlike many of his creations, now the attack on an uncaring society combines comedy with scorn and irony. Dickens uses the social background of Victorian London to narrate in a dramatic and melodramatic but also comic manner a murder and mystery tale about a woman, Esther Summerson, who discovers the truth about her birth and her mother's identity and the latter's tragic life.

Remarkable in this novel is its narrative structure: most of the story is narrated by a story teller whose identity is not revealed. He is an outsider, a participant and then an onlooker (Horsman 126) who impersonates a limited omniscient narrator. He uses the third person and narrates in a realistic manner in the past when he recalls events he witnessed and in the present when he comments on something that gradually unfolds before him. The other narrator is Esther Summerson who uses the first person and the past tense and whose story is in the form of recollections. Her narrative is more personal; it is a sort of 'romantic narrative in which true love wins in the end' (Gill xvii). These two types of narrative are a constant challenge for the readers who, as Gill remarks (xvii), have to comprehend and assess the fictional material they are offered.

This novel is one of the first ones in which the solution to a murder mystery is given a central place, consistent and cohesive treatment. And, as usual with Dickens, this novel is a parable where the topic of the abandoned child is exploited to moralise on the theme of re-discovery and redemption.

London in November

The fragment inserted below contains the well-known and despondent description of Victorian London, polluted by smog and soiled by mud. Dickens's representation is very different from the prosperous image of the city suggested by the proud Great Exhibition of 1851.

London. Michaelmas term lately over, and the Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln's Inn Hall. Implacable November weather. As much mud in the streets as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a *Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill. Smoke lowering down from chimney-pots, making a soft black drizzle, with flakes of *soot in it as big as full-grown snowflakes—gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun. Dogs, undistinguishable in mire. Horses, scarcely better; splashed to their very *blinkers. Foot passengers, jostling one another's umbrellas in a general infection of ill temper, and losing their foot-hold at street-corners, where tens of thousands of other foot passengers have been slipping and sliding since the day broke (if this day ever broke), adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud, sticking at those points tenaciously to the pavement, and accumulating at compound interest.

Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows among green *aits and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the *tiers of shipping and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex marshes, fog on the Kentish heights. Fog creeping into the *cabooses of *collier-brigs; fog lying out on the yards and hovering in the

Londra. Sesiunea de toamnă pe terminate şi Lordul Preşedinte înscăunat în sala de şedinţe de la Lincoln's Inn. Vreme neînduărătoare de noiembrie. Pe străzi atâta noroi de parcă apele abia s-ar fi retras de pe faţa pământului şi n-ar fi de mirare să întâlneşti un megalosaur, lung de patruzeci de picioare sau cam aşa ceva, urcându-se legănat ca o şopârlă uriaşă pe colina Holborn. Fum ce se lasă în jos de pe gurile hornurilor şi se preface într-o burniţă înceată şi neagră cu fulgi de funingine mari cât fulgii de zăpadă... jelind, ţi-ar veni a spune, moartea soarelui. Câinii, una cu noroiul. Caii, stropiţi chiar până sub ochelarii hamurilor, nu-s mai acătării. Trecătorii, ciocnindu-şi coatelele unii de alţii, morocănoşi cu toţii de parc-ar fi cuprinşi de o molimă, scapătă din picioare la colţuri de stradă, unde, de la ivirea zorilor (dacă se mai poate spune că s-au ivit într-adevăr zorile) zeci de mii de alţi trecători au călcat greşit şi au alunecat, adăugând noi depozite la straturile de noroi adunate unele peste altele, ce se lipesc temeinic de caldarâm în locurile acelea şi sporesc îndoit rezerva.

Ceaţă pretutindeni. Ceaţă în susul Tamisei, ce se strecoară printre ostroave şi pajişti verzi; ceaţă în josul Tamisei ce se rostogoleşte întinată de navele rânduite în şiruri şi de scârnăviile unei metropole mari dar murdare, aruncate pe malurile apei. Ceaţă pe mlaştinile Essexului, ceaţă pe culmile Kentului. Ceaţă

rigging of great ships; fog drooping on the *gunwales of barges and small boats. Fog in the eyes and throats of ancient *Greenwich pensioners, wheezing by the firesides of their wards; fog in the stem and bowl of the afternoon pipe of the wrathful skipper, down in his close cabin; fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers of his shivering little ʻprentice boy on deck. Chance people on the bridges peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog, with fog all round them, as if they were up in a balloon and hanging in the misty clouds.

Gas looming through the fog in divers places in the streets, much as the sun may, from the spongey fields, be seen to loom by husbandman and ploughboy. Most of the shops lighted two hours before their time—as the gas seems to know, for it has a haggard and unwilling look.

The raw afternoon is rawest, and the dense fog is densest, and the muddy streets are muddiest near that leaden-headed old obstruction, appropriate ornament for the threshold of a leaden-headed old corporation, *Temple Bar. And hard by Temple Bar, in Lincoln's Inn Hall, at the very heart of the fog, sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery.

Never can there come fog too thick, never can there come mud and *mire too deep, to assort with the groping and *floundering condition which this High Court of Chancery, most pestilent of *hoary sinners, holds this day in the sight of heaven

târându-se în cabinele vapoarelor de cărbuni, ceață așezându-se de-a lungul șantierelor, ceață plutind peste odgoanele marilor corăbii; ceață lăsându-se peste bordurile bărcilor și ale luntrilor. Ceață în ochii și gâtlejurile pensionarilor vârstnici din azilul Greenwich ce abia își trag sufletul pe lângă focurile din dormitoare; ceață în coada și-n găoacea lulelei de după-amiază a comandantului mânios în cabina lui strâmtă—neaerisită; ceață ce-nțeapă fără milă degetele de la picioarele și mâinile micuțului ucenic care tremură pe punte. Oameni din întâmplare pe poduri aruncându-și privirile peste balustrade în cerul de ceață de sub ei, cu ceața jur împrejurul lor, ca și cum ar fi sus într-un balon și ar spânzura printre norii neguroși.

Lumină de felinare întrezărită în diferite locuri pe stradă atât cât poate și soarele de pe ogoarele afânate licări gospodarului și plugarului. Prăvălii, cele mai multe cu luminile aprinse cu două ceasuri înainte de vreme... ceea ce și gazul pare să știe, deoarece lumina lui e slabă și dușmănoasă.

După-amiaza umedă și rece e mai umedă și mai rece, ceața deasă mai deasă, iar străzile noroioase încă mai noroioase pe lângă Poarta Temple, vechi și plumburiu obstacol, podoabă potrivită pentru pragul unei vechi și plumburii corporații. Și drept lângă Bariera Temple, în sala de ședințe de la Lincoln's Inn, în chiar inima ceții, stă înscăunat Înaltul Lord Președinte în Înalta sa Curte de Justiție.

and earth.

(in *Bleak House* 1-2)

Acolo nicicând n-ar fi ceața destul de deasă, şi nici noroiul destul de mare pentru a se potrivi cu orbecăirea şi zbaterea în care Înalta Curte de Justiție, cea mai infamă dintre toți păcătoşii învechiți în rele, ține azi şedința sub căutătura îngăduitoare a cerului şi a pământului.

[Traducere de Costache Popa, Editura Univers, București, 1971

Bleak House

The fragment below is extracted from the last part of the novel and is narrated by Esther Summerson. John Jarndyce, Esther's protector, who Esther has accepted as a husband to show him her gratitude, decides to reveal Bleak House, his property, to her, and, in a moving and slightly melodramatic way, surrenders Bleak House to her and herself to Doctor Allan Woodcourt, the man she has always been in love with.

We went on by a pretty little orchard, where the cherries were nestling among the green leaves and the shadows of the apple-trees were sporting on the grass, to the house itself—a cottage, quite a rustic cottage of doll's rooms; but such a lovely place, so tranquil and so beautiful, with such a rich and smiling country spread around it; with water sparkling away into the distance, here all overhung with summer-growth, there turning a humming mill; at its nearest point glancing through a meadow by the cheerful town, where cricket-players were assembling in bright groups and a flag was flying from a white tent that rippled in the sweet west wind. And still, as we went through the pretty rooms, out at the little rustic verandah doors, and underneath the tiny wooden colonnades garlanded with *woodbine, *jasmine, and *honey-suckle, I saw in the papering on the walls, in the colours of the furniture, in the arrangement of all the pretty objects, *my* little tastes and fancies, *my* little methods and inventions which they used to laugh at while they

Am mers mai departe printr-o mică livadă, în care cireşele se cuibăreau printre frunzele verzi, iar umbrele merilor jucau pe iarbă, până am ajuns la casă... O vilă, chiar o vilă rustică, având odăițe de păpuşă, dar o locuință atât de drăgălaşă, atât de liniştită şi atât de frumoasă, cu o privelişte atât de bogată şi veselă ce se desfăşura în jurul ei, cu o apă ce sclipea în depărtare, pe-alocuri acoperită de verdeața verii, învârtind mai încolo roata unei mori ce lucra de zor, iar ici, mai aproape, scânteind la poalele oraşului vesel printr-o păşune pe care se adunau jucătorii de crichet în grupuri viu colorate, iar un stindard flutura deasupra unui cort alb, ce ondula în bătaia vântului blând din apus. Şi totuşi, în timp ce treceam prin odăile plăcute, către uşile micii şi rusticei verande şi pe sub micuțele colonade de lemn, încununate cu iederă, iasomie şi caprifoi, am văzut în tapetul pereților, în coloritul mobilelor, în orânduirea tuturor lucrurilor frumoase, micile mele gusturi şi fantezii, micile mele metode şi invenții, de care ei de obicei râdeau, dar pe care le lăudau totuşi, în sfârşit pretutindeni

praised them, my odd ways everywhere.

I could not say enough in admiration of what was all so beautiful, but one secret doubt arose in my mind when I saw this, I thought, oh, would he be the happier for it! Would it not have been better for his peace that I should not have been so brought before him? Because although I was not what he thought me, still he loved me very dearly, and it might remind him mournfully of what be believed he had lost. I did not wish him to forget me—perhaps he might not have done so, without these aids to his memory—but my way was easier than his, and I could have reconciled myself even to that so that he had been the happier for it.

'And now, little woman,' said my guardian, whom I had never seen so proud and joyful as in showing me these things and watching my appreciation of them, 'now, last of all, for the name of this house.'

'What is it called, dear guardian?'

'My child,' said he, 'come and see.'

He took me to the porch, which he had hitherto avoided, and said, pausing before we went out, 'My dear child, don't you guess the name?'

'No!' said I.

We went out of the porch and he showed me written over it, BLEAK HOUSE.

toate aranjate după gustul meu, de parcă aş fi fost de faţă.

N-am fost în stare să spun tot cât ar fi trebuit, în admiraţia atâtor frumuseţi, dar o îndoială tainică mi-a încolţit în suflet, când le-am văzut pe toate. M-am gândit: „O, de-ar fi mai fericit aşa! N-ar fi fost încă mai bine pentru pacea lui sufletească să nu mă fi adus aşa sub ochii lui? Fiindcă, deşi nu eram ceea ce mă credea domnul Woodcourt, totuşi mă iubea foarte mult şi s-ar fi putut să-i amintească dureros şi jalnic de tot ceea ce crezuse că a pierdut. Nu doream să mă uite. Poate că m-arfi uitat fără asemenea ajutoare ale memoriei... Dar situaţia mea era mai uşoară decât a lui şi m-aş fi împăcat
chiar cu gândul de a mă fi uitat, dacă asta l-ar fi făcut mai fericit.

—Şi-acum, domniţă, exclamă tutorele, pe care niciodată nu l-am văzut
atât de mândru şi bucuros ca acum, când îmi arăta toate lucrurile acelea şi mă pândea să vadă cât îmi plac de mult, acum, ultimul lucru din toate e numele casei.

—Şi cum se va numi, dragă tutore?

—Copila mea, îmi răspunse el, hai să vezi. Mă duse la veranda casei, pe care până acuma o ocolise şi, oprindu-se o clipă, înainte de-a ieşi afară, mă întrebă:

—Copilă dragă, nu-i ghiceşti numele?

—Nu.

Am ieşit afară şi-mi arătă scris deasupra verandei, pe

He led me to a seat among the leaves close by, and sitting down beside me and taking my hand in his, spoke to me thus, ‘My darling girl, in what there has been between us, I have, I hope, been really solicitous for your happiness. When I wrote you the letter to which you brought the answer,’ smiling as he referred to it, ‘I had my own too much in view; but I had yours too. Whether, under different circumstances, I might ever have renewed the old dream I sometimes dreamed when you were very young, of making you my wife one day, I need not ask myself. I did renew it, and I wrote my letter, and you brought your answer. You are following what I say, my child?’

I was cold, and I trembled violently, but not a word he uttered was lost. As I sat looking fixedly at him and the sun’s rays descended, softly shining through the leaves upon his bare head, I felt as if the brightness on him must be like the brightness of the angels.

‘Hear me, my love, but do not speak. It is for me to speak now. When it was that I began to doubt whether what I had done would really make you happy is no matter. Woodcourt came home, and I soon had no doubt at all.’

I clasped him round the neck and hung my head upon his breast and wept. ‘Lie lightly, confidently here, my child,’ said he, pressing me gently to him. ‘I am your guardian and your father now. Rest confidently here.’

fronton: Casa Umbrelor.

Mă duse la o bancă drept sub un frunzar şi, aşezându-se alături de mine, şi luându-mi mâna într-ale lui, îmi spuse următoarele cuvinte:

—Scumpa mea fată, în toate câte s-au petrecut între noi, am fost, nădăjduiesc, urmărit de gândul şi de dorința de a te face fericită. Când ți-am scris scrisoarea la care mi-ai adus răspunsul—şi zâmbea, vorbind de scrisoare—m-am gândit prea mult la fericirea mea; dar m-am gândit şi la a ta. Că, în alte împrejurări mi-aş fi putut reînnoi visul vechi de a te lua într-o zi de soție, vis pe care odinioară, când tu erai foarte mică, mi-l făurisem, nu-i nevoie s-o mai spun. De fapt, l-am reînnoit, şi ți-am scris o scrisoare şi tu mi-ai adus răspunsul. Tu urmăreşti ce-ți spun, copilă?

Îmi înghețase sângele în vine şi tremuram din toate încheieturile, dar n-am pierdut nici un cuvânt din cele rostite de el. Cum şedeam uitându-mă neclintit la el, şi razele soarelui căzuseră pe nesimțite, strălucind printre frunze, deasupra capului său descoperit, am avut sentimentul că strălucirea aceea din jurul lui trebuie să fie ca nimbul îngerilor.

—Ascultă-mă, scumpa mea, dar să nu vorbeşti; e rândul meu să vorbesc acum. Când anume s-a întâmplat să-ncep a mă îndoi că ceea ce-mi pusesem în minte are să te facă cu adevărat fericită, n-are nici-o importanță.

Soothingly, like the gentle rustling of the leaves; and genially, like the ripening weather; and radiantly and beneficently, like the sunshine, he went on.

'Understand me, my dear girl. I had no doubt of your being contented and happy with me, being so dutiful and so devoted; but I saw with whom you would be happier. That I penetrated his secret when Dame Durden was blind to it is no wonder, for I knew the good that could never change in her better far than she did. Well! I have long been in Allan Woodcourt's confidence, although he was not, until yesterday, a few hours before you came here, in mine. But I would not have my Esther's bright example lost; I would not have a jot of my dear girl's virtues unobserved and unhonoured; I would not have her admitted on sufferance into the line of Morgan ap Kerrig, no, not for the weight in gold of all the mountains in Wales!'

He stopped to kiss me on the forehead, and I sobbed and wept afresh. For I felt as if I could not bear the painful delight of his praise.

'Hush, little woman! Don't cry; this is to be a day of joy. I have looked forward to it,' he said exultingly, 'for months on months!' […]

He tenderly raised my head, and as I clung to him, kissed me in his old fatherly way again and again. What a light, now, on the protecting manner I had thought about!

Woodcourt s-a întors între timp acasă, şi curând după asta n-am mai avut nici-o îndoială.

L-am cuprins cu brațele pe după gât şi, lăsându-mi capul pe pieptul lui, am plâns.

—Lasă-te uşurel şi cu încredere, copila mea, îmi spuse, cuprinzându—mă delicat cu mâinile. Îți sunt tutore şi tată acum. Stai aici în tihnă şi cu încredere la pieptul meu.

Mângâietor ca foşnetul delicat al frunzelor, blând ca vremea pârgului, luminos şi binefăcător ca lumina soarelui, tutorele continuă:

—Înțelege-mă, fata mea dragă. N-am avut nici-o îndoială că ai să fii mulțumită şi fericită cu mine, ştiindu-te atât de supusă şi de devotată; dar am văzut cu cine ai fi mai fericită. Că i-am pătruns taina, când Doamna Minerva era încă oarbă, nu-i de mirare, pentru că i-am cunoscut cu mult mai bine decât ea comoara ce nu s-ar putea niciodată schimba. Aşa! Află că de multă vreme ştiu tainele lui Woodcourt cu toate că el nu le-a ştiut pe-ale mele până ieri, cu câteva ceasuri înainte de-a veni tu aici. Dar n-am vrut ca strălucitorul exemplu al Estherei mele să se piardă; n-am vrut ca măcar o fărâmă din virtuțile fetei mele scumpe să treacă neluate în seamă şi neonorate, n-am vrut nici pentru tot aurul munților din Țara Galilor ca ea să fie primită prin toleranță în descendența nobilului Morgan ap Kerrig!

Aici s-a oprit ca să mă sărute pe frunte, iar eu am suspinat

'One more last word. When Allan Woodcourt spoke to you, my dear, he spoke with my knowledge and consent—but I gave him no encouragement, not I, for these surprises were my great reward, and I was too miserly to part with a scrap of it. He was to come and tell me all that passed, and he did. I have no more to say. My dearest, Allan Woodcourt stood beside your father when he lay dead—stood beside your mother. This is Bleak House. This day I give this house its little mistress; and before God, it is the brightest day in all my life!'

He rose and raised me with him. We were no longer alone. My husband—I have called him by that name full seven happy years now—stood at my side.

'Allan,' said my guardian, 'take from me a willing gift, the best wife that ever man had. What more can I say for you than that I know you deserve her! Take with her the little home she brings you. You know what she will make it, Allan; you know what she has made its namesake. Let me share its felicity sometimes, and what do I sacrifice? Nothing, nothing.'

He kissed me once again, and now the tears were in his eyes as he said more softly, 'Esther, my dearest, after so many years, there is a kind of parting in this too. I know that my mistake has caused you some distress. Forgive your old guardian, in restoring him to his old place in your affections; and blot it out of your memory. Allan, take my dear.'

şi m-am pus iarăşi pe plâns, pentru că am simţit că nu mai pot îndura bucuria dureroasă a laudelor sale.

—Taci, domniţă, nu plânge; ziua de astăzi se cuvine să fie o zi de veselie. Am aşteptat-o, urmă el în plină euforie, de luni şi luni de zile! încă vreo câteva cuvinte, Doamnă Trap, şi eu am terminat ce-aveam de spus. Hotărât să nu las să se piardă nici un firicel din meritele Estherei mele, m-am destăinuit numai doamnei Woodcourt.

—Ascultă, doamnă, îi spun eu, văd bine... ba, mai mult, ştiu chiar... Că băiatul dumitale o iubeşte pe pupila mea. Pe deasupra, sunt foarte sigur că pupila mea îl iubeşte pe fiul dumitale, dar îşi va sacrifica dragostea pentru un simţ de datorie şi de afecţiune şi o va sacrifica atât de desăvârşit, atât de deplin, atât de religios, încât niciodată n-ai să bănuieşti c-ar fi făcut aşa ceva, chiar de-ai pândi-o zi şi noapte.

După aceea, i-am spus toată povestea noastră... A noastră..., a ta şi-a mea.

—Acuma, doamnă, ştiind cele de mai sus, vino şi locuieşte cu noi. Vino şi-mi vezi copila ceas cu ceas; pune ceea ce vezi alături de arborele dumneatale genealogic, care-i aşa şi pe dincolo... Pentru că mi-era silă să nu-i vorbesc pe şleau, să mă sclifosesc... Şi, după ce vei lua o hotărâre într-un fel sau altul, în privinţa asta, să-mi spui şi mie ce-nseamnă să fii cu adevărat legitim, născut dintr-o căsătorie legitimă. Ei, bine, cinste ei şi

(in *Bleak House* 889-91)

străvechiului ei neam din Țara Galilor, draga mea, strigă tutorele, cu entuziasm. Cred că inima ce-o însufleţeşte, bate la fel de cald, cu aceeaşi admirație şi cu aceeaşi dragoste pentru Doamna Minerva, ca şi inima mea!

Cu duioşie îmi ridică încetişor capul şi cum stăteam agățată de gâtul lui, mă sărută de multe ori în felul său părintesc de totdeauna. Ce lumină se revărsa acuma asupra felului ocrotitor la care mă gândisem de-atâtea ori!—încă un cuvânt! Când Allan Woodcourt a vorbit cu tine, draga mea, el ți-a vorbit cu ştiința şi consimțământul meu... Dar eu nu i-am dat nici-o speranță, nu, nu i-am dat, pentru că bucuriile neaşteptate, ca acelea de acum, sunt răsplata mea cea mare, şi am fost prea zgârcit şi n-am vrut să pierd nici-o fărâmă din ele. El trebuia să vină la mine şi să-mi spună tot, ce şi cum s-a petrecut. Şi aşa a făcut. Şi-acum nu mai am nimic de spus. Dragul meu Allan Woodcourt a stat alături de tatăl tău când zăcea mort... A stat alături de măicuța ta. Asta e Casa Umbrelor. Astăzi i-o dăruiesc, micuței mele stăpâne, şi mărturisesc înaintea lui Dumnezeu că e ziua cea mai strălucitoare din toată viața mea! se sculă şi mă ridică şi pe mine cu el. Nu mai eram singuri. Soțul meu... îi spun aşa de şapte ani împliniți şi fericiți..., stătea alături de mine.

—Allan, îl chemă tutorele, ia din mâna mea un dar făcut cu dragă inimă, ia cea mai bună soție de care a avut vreodată parte un bărbat. Ce-ți mai pot eu spune, decât că ştiu că o meriți! Ia, o

dată cu ea, micuțul cuib pe care ți-l aduce. Tu ştii ce are să facă Esther din el. Tu ştii ce-a făcut ea din cealaltă Casă a Umbrelor! îngăduie-mi să-mpart şi eu cu voi fericirea acestui
cămin, şi ce sacrificiu fac eu? Niciunul, niciunul!

M-a sărutat încă o dată, dar de data asta lacrimile erau în ochii lui când mi-a şoptit cu vocea mai înduioşată:

—Esther, draga mea, scumpa mea, după atâția ani, iată şi între noi un soi de despărțire. Ştiu că greşeala mea îți pricinuieşte oarecare amărăciune, iartă-l pe bătrânul tău tutore, pune-l la locul lui de altădată în dragostea ta şi şterge-i greşeala din amintirea ta. Allan, ia-o pe draga mea.

[Traducere de Costache Popa, Editura Univers, București, 1971]

William Makepeace Thackeray

(1822-1863)



William Makepeace Thackeray (1822-1863) was born in Calcutta, India, where his father was an administrator in the East India Company. In 1816 soon after the death of his father, Thackeray was sent home to England.

He went to several grammar schools, then in 1822 to Charterhouse, a London public (private) school and to Trinity College, Cambridge (1828-1830). In 1830 he left Cambridge without taking a degree, and during 1831-1833 he studied law at the Middle Temple, London.

He then considered painting as a profession and, consequently, he was able to illustrate many of his early writings. The money that he had inherited from his father was soon lost through gambling and unlucky speculations and investments. In 1836, he became a hardworking and prolific professional journalist writing for a newspaper his stepfather had bought.

The nineteenth century was the age of the magazine, which had been developed to meet the demand for family reading among the growing middle class. In the late 1830s Thackeray became a notable contributor of articles on varied topics to *Fraser's Magazine*, *The New Monthly Magazine*, and, later, to *Punch*. His work was unsigned or written under such pen names as Mr. Michael Angelo Titmarsh, Fitz-Boodle, The Fat Contributor, or Ikey Solomons. He collected the best of these early writings in *Miscellanies*, 4 vol. (1855-1857). These include among others: *The Yellowplush Correspondence* and *The Luck of Barry Lyndon* (1844; revised as *The Memoirs of Barry Lyndon*, 1856).

The serial publication in 1847-1848 of his novel *Vanity Fair* brought Thackeray both fame and prosperity, and from then on he was an established author on the English scene. The world of speculants and upstarts was also introduced to his contemporaries in *The Book of Snobs* (1846-1847)—a collection of articles that had appeared successfully in *Punch* (as 'The Snobs of England, by One of Themselves', 1846-1847) where he displays great talent for character sketching. Money problems lie also at the core of his novels *The History of Pendennis* (1850) and *The Newcomes* (1853-1855).

Although Thackeray's two other major novels—*The History of Henry Esmond* (1852) and its sequel *The Virginians* (1851-1859) narrate about events during the American War of Independence in the time of Queen Anne, in them the author indirectly deals with social problems of his own time. Many critics consider that *Henry Esmond* is the best of Thackeray's novels.

The Rose and the Ring is Thackeray's entertaining Christmas book for 1855. *The English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century*

(published in 1853) and *The Four Georges* (published in 1860) are based on the lectures he delivered in the United States.

After 1856 he settled in London and stood unsuccessfully for Parliament in 1857, quarrelled with Dickens, formerly a friendly rival, and in 1860 founded *The Cornhill Magazine*, becoming its editor.

He died in 1863 after having begun writing the novel *Denis Duval*. A commemorative bust of him was placed in Westminster Abbey. Throughout his works, Thackeray analysed and deplored snobbery and frequently gave his opinions on human behaviour and the shortcomings of society. He was a ardent examiner of hypocrisy, secret emotions, ambition, treachery and the vanity of much of life—a materialisation of his opinion that an important function of the novelist is to moralise. He had little time for exaggerated characterization and melodramatic plots, preferring in his own work to be closer to real life and offering the reader entertaining narrative, description, dialogue, and comment.

Unlike Dickens, Thackeray's novels deal mostly with the upper classes of society. His characters are portraits of real people and very often the author concentrates on the wicked and false-hearted persons in the case of which thoughtlessness and lack of principles predominate. If Dickens tends to be sympathetic with many of his characters, Thackeray prefers to keep distances, to be an impartial, neutral observer able thus to judge his personages more objectively. The novels are lively, biting and humorous and they often become satirical, ironic and even malicious creations. But Thackeray's satire, however stinging it may be at times, is not the result of evil intent, it is like the punishment of a parent who hopes that his critical attitude will also teach and offer cure to the child.

From *Vanity Fair*

Vanity Fair is the story of two women—one of them is the clever, pushing and unscrupulous Becky Sharp, who would do everything to have money and get up to the top of the social scale; the other is the well-meaning, virtuous Amelia Sedley, who is a brainless and insipid creature, always lamenting and who is happy, paradoxically, only when she is unhappy. Becky is the character around whom all the men play their parts in an upper middle-class and aristocratic background.

Subtitled 'A Novel Without a Hero', the novel is not concentrated on individual heroes—good or bad—it is deliberately antiheroic and sooner focuses on typology and situation.

A noteworthy characteristic of the novel is Thackeray's behaviour as the narrator of the work and 'the inadequacies of omniscient representation' (Levine 64). Very often he is an omniscient writer endowed with a God-like type of authority—he can do whatever he wants with hic novel and its characters. But there are times when he becomes an 'I', a person like every one of his readers, who cannot know everything, and, consequently, desacralizes the God-like position of the author (Cutitaru 34) and openly pronounces his partial omniscience—he frankly declares that he cannot possibly know everything about his characters. It is not seldom that he acquires material existence as he steps forward from the novel and discusses directly with his readers about the principles of his artistic method. As Galea argues (95), this type of self-consciousness gives the novel matafictional overtones.

The Manager of the Performance

As previously mentioned, for Thackeray, the omniscient writer is an important component of the story. This status of author-narrator equated with that of a manager of a performance, enables him to turn his 'story' into a 'plot' (Galea 95) and make his actors play whatever he assigns them to. The text below illustrates this viewpoint: the author-manager is a puppeteer who sets his puppets going. By extrapolation, the novel's

characters are the puppets on the stage and his story is a puppet show that takes place in a fair. Bu the novel's allusion is obvious: the puppets are Thackeray's contemporaries and the fair is the all-pervading England.

As the Manager of the Performance sits before the curtain on the boards and looks into the Fair, a feeling of profound melancholy comes over him in his survey of the bustling place. There is a great quantity of eating and drinking, making love and *jilting, laughing and the contrary, smoking, cheating, fighting, dancing and fiddling; there are bullies pushing about, bucks *ogling the women, *knaves picking pockets, policemen on the look-out, *quacks (*other* quacks, plague take them!) *bawling in front of their booths, and *yokels looking up at the *tinselled dancers and poor old rouged tumblers, while the light-fingered folk are operating upon their pockets behind. Yes, this is VANITY FAIR; not a moral place certainly; nor a merry one, though very noisy. Look at the faces of the actors and buffoons when they come off from their business; and Tom Fool washing the paint off his cheeks before he sits down to dinner with his wife and the little Jack Puddings behind the canvas. The curtain will be up presently, and he will be turning over head and heels, and crying, 'How are you?' […]

What more has the Manager of the Performance to say?—To acknowledge the kindness with which it has been received in all the principal towns of England through which the Show has

Stând pe scenă, în spatele cortinei, și urmărind Bâlciul, Directorul Reprezentației e copleșit de un simțământ profund de melancolie la vederea acestui loc agitat. Găsești acolo cantități uriașe de mâncare și băutură, dragoste, flirt și trădare, hohote de râs și reversul acestora, fum de țigară, șarlatanie, certuri, dans și meschinărie; polițiști care-și caută locul, fanți care fac ochi dulci femeilor, cuțite care găuresc buzunare, oameni de ordine care stau cu ochii în patru, șarlatani (*alți* șarlatani, lovi-i-ar ciuma!) care stau în fața tarabelor și-și laudă marfa și țărănoi care-și ridică ochii atrași de dansatori îmbrăcați în straie strălucitoare și de saltimbanci sulemeniți, bătrâni și săraci, în timp ce indivizi cu degete agile le golesc buzunarele de la spate. Da, acesta este BÂLCIUL DEȘERTĂCIUNILOR; cu siguranță nu este un loc pur, și nici unul vesel, chiar dacă e foarte zgomotos. Uită-te la fețele actorilor și ale bufonilor după ce-și termină rolul; și la Tom Fool când își spală obrajii de vopsea înainte de a cina alături de soția sa; și la piticul Jack Puddings din spatele cortului. Curând, cortina va fi ridicată, iar el se va da peste cap și va striga: ,, Ce mai faci?"

Ce-ar mai putea adăuga Directorul Reprezentației?—Să mulțumească dragostei cu care a fost primit în principalele orașe

passed, and where it has been most favourably noticed by the respected conductors of the public Press, and by the Nobility and Gentry. He is proud to think that his Puppets have given satisfaction to the very best company in this empire. The famous little Becky Puppet has been pronounced to be uncommonly flexible in the joints, and lively on the wire; the Amelia Doll, though it has had a smaller circle of admirers, has yet been carved and dressed with the greatest care by the artist; the Dobbin Figure, though apparently clumsy, yet dances in a very amusing and natural manner; the Little Boys' Dance has been liked by some; and please to remark the richly dressed figure of the Wicked Nobleman, on which no expense has been spared, and which Old Nick will fetch away at the end of this singular performance.

And with this, and a profound bow to his patrons, the Manager retires, and the curtain rises.

(in 'Before the Curtain', *Vanity Fair* 1-2)

ale Angliei prin care a trecut Spectacolul și unde a fost întâmpinat cu bunăvoință de către onorații conducători ai Presei Publice, de către nobili și oamenii obișnuiți. Este mândru că marionetele sale au reușit să încânte societatea cea mai aleasă a acestui imperiu. Încheieturile micuței Becky, faimoasa marionetă, au fost făcute special neobișnuit de flexibile, sforile dându-i viață; deși are un cerc de admiratori mai mic, păpușa Amelia a fost cioplită și îmbrăcată de artist cu cea mai mare grijă; deși pare stângace, figurina Dobbin dansează într-un stil foarte natural și nostim; unora le-a plăcut dansul băieților; și remarcați, vă rog, silueta fastuos îmbrăcată a nobilului Wicked, nefiind făcută nici o economie în acest sens, și de care bătrânul Nick se va debarasa în finalul acestei reprezentații unice.

Și cu acestea și cu o adâncă plecăciune în fața spectatorilor, Directorul se retrage și cortina se ridică. (În spatele cortinei).

[Traducere de Constanța Tănăsescu, Editura Rao Clasic, București, 2003]

Private and Confidential

Another type of Thackeray's authorial presence is felt in those scenes, like the one below, when he steps forward from the texture of the novel, as previously remarked, turns into an 'I' ('we', actually), and engages in conversation with his readers, adds comments and remarks or discusses with them the principles of his artistic method and gives them details about how the novel was made. In such cases he becomes an intrusive narrator, a voice narrating in the first person without any trace of sentimentality, and his creation heads towards a self-reflexive novel of modern times.

I warn my '*kyind friends', then, that I am going to tell a story of *harrowing villainy and complicated—but, as I trust, intensely interesting—crime. My rascals are no milk-and-water rascals, I promise you. When we come to the proper places we won't spare fine language—No, no! But when we are going over the quiet country we must *perforce be calm. A tempest in a *slop-basin is absurd. We will reserve that sort of thing for the mighty ocean and the lonely midnight. The present Chapter is very mild. Others—But we will not anticipate *those*.

And, as we bring our characters forward, I will ask leave, as a man and a brother, not only to introduce them, but occasionally to step down from the platform, and talk about them: if they are good and kindly, to love them and shake them by the hand: if they are silly, to laugh at them confidentially in the reader's sleeve: if they are wicked and heartless, to abuse

Personal și Confidențial

Îi previn deci pe ,,binevoitorii mei prieteni" că am să le povestesc istoria unei ticăloșii nemaipomenite, a unei crime extrem de complicate, dar totodată extrem de interesante, lucru de care sunt încredințat—, căci ticăloșii mei nu sunt ticăloși de rând, puteți fi siguri de asta. Când avem de-a face cu oameni cumsecade, n-avem de gând să economisim vorbele frumoase, nu, nu! Dar când trecem dincolo de regiunile liniștite, trebuie, la rândul nostru, să ne păstrăm cumpătul. O furtună într-o găleată cu apă e un lucru absurd. O vom păstra însă pentru nesfârșitul ocean și singurătatea miezului de noapte. Prezentul capitol e numai gingășie. Altele...Dar să nu le anticipăm.

Și pe măsură ce avem să dezvoltăm caracterul eroilor noștri, am să vă cer îngăduința, ca om și ca frate, să nu vi-i prezint numai, ci să și cobor uneori printre ei și să și vorbesc despre ei; când sunt buni și generoși, să-i iubesc și să le strâng

them in the strongest terms which politeness admits of.

Otherwise you might fancy it was I who was sneering at the practice of devotion, which Miss Sharp finds so ridiculous; that it was I who laughed good-humouredly at the *reeling old Silenus of a baronet—whereas the laughter comes from one who has no reverence except for prosperity, and no eye for anything beyond success. Such people there are living and flourishing in the world—Faithless, Hopeless, Charityless: let us have at them, dear friends, with might and *main. Some there are, and very successful too, mere quacks and fools: and it was to combat and expose such as those, no doubt, that Laughter was made.

(in *Vanity Fair* 95-6)

mâna; când sunt neghiobi, să râd de ei pe ascuns faţă de cititori, iar de sunt ticăloşi şi lipsiţi de inimă, să-i ocărăsc cu cele mai aspre cuvinte pe care mi le îngăduie buna-cuviinţă.

Altminteri, v-aţi putea închipui ca eu sunt acela care îmi bat joc de practica devoţiunii, pe care o găseşte atât de ridicolă domnişoara Sharp; eu sunt acela care-am râs cu atâta poftă de mersul împleticit de bătrân Silen al baronetului, pe când în realitate hohotele de râs pornesc de la fiinţa aceea care nu respectă decât bogăţia şi care nu are ochi decât pentru succes. Pe lume există şi astfel de oameni şi-o scot foarte bine la capăt, fără credinţă, fără speranţă, fără milostenie; să-i atacăm, dragi prieteni, cu putere şi cu vigoare. Mai sunt şi alţii, şi tot norocoşi sunt, şarlatanii şi nebunii, care trebuie şi ei combătuţi şi daţi în vileag, ca unii pentru care a fost creat fără îndoială râsul.

[Traducere de Constanţa Tănăsescu, Editura Rao Clasic, Bucureşti, 2003]

Breaking News

A general characteristic of the novel is the author's humour, often with sarcastic or ironic overtones as in the two extracts inserted below.

The fragment below records the delicate moment when Mrs Bute Crawley (Miss Crawley's sister-in-law) and Miss Briggs (Miss Crawley's dame de compagnie) have to tell Miss Crawley (Sir Pitt Crawley's rich and unmarried sister) that her nephew, Rawdon, married Becky Sharp, a marriage much below his class and the old spinster's expectations.

It was not until the old lady was fairly *ensconced in her usual arm-chair in the drawing-room, and the preliminary embraces and inquiries had taken place between the ladies, that the conspirators thought it advisable to submit her to the operation. Who has not admired the artifices and delicate approaches with which women 'prepare' their friends for bad news? Miss Crawley's two friends made such an apparatus of mystery before they broke the intelligence to her, that they worked her up to the necessary degree of doubt and alarm.

'And she refused Sir Pitt, my dear, dear Miss Crawley, prepare yourself for it,' Mrs Bute said, because—because she couldn't help herself.'

'Of course there was a reason,' Miss Crawley answered. 'She likes somebody else. I told Briggs so yesterday.'

'*Likes* somebody else!' Briggs gasped. 'Oh my dear friend, she is married already.'

Scrisoarea de pe pernița de ace

Conspiratoarele găsiră de cuviință s-o supună operației respective numai după ce bătrâna doamnă se așeză în fotoliul ei obișnuit din salon și după ce îmbrățișările preliminare și întrebările de rigoare se schimbară, după toate regulile, între cele două doamne. Cine nu s-a minunat de vicleșugurile și de gingașele aluzii cu care-și „pregătesc" femeile prietenele pentru veștile aducătoare de nenorocire? Cele două prietene ale domnișoarei Crawley făuriră o asemenea țesătură plină de mister mai înainte de a-i servi noutatea, încât îi ațâțară în măsura cuvenită și îndoiala, și neliniștea.

—Și ea l-a refuzat pe sir Pitt, scumpa mea, scumpă domnișoară Crawley, pregătește-te și dumneata pentru vestea asta, zise doamna Bute, pentru că ea nu putea face altfel.

—Bineînțeles că e ceva la mijloc, răspunse domnișoara Crawley. E îndrăgostită de altcineva. Așa i-a spus ieri domnișoarei Briggs.

'Married already,' Mrs Bute chimed in; and both sate with hands clasped looking from each other at their victim.

'Send her to me the instant she comes in. The little sly wretch: how dare she not tell me?' cried out Miss Crawley.

'She won't come in soon. Prepare yourself dear friend—she's gone out for a long time—she's—she's gone altogether.'

'Gracious goodness, and who's to make my chocolate? Send for her and have her back: I desire that she come back,' the old lady said.

'She *decamped last night, Ma'am,' cried Mrs Bute.

'She left a letter for me,' Briggs exclaimed. She's married to—'

'Prepare her, for heaven's sake. Don't torture her, my dear Miss Briggs.'

'She's married to whom?' cries the spinster in a nervous fury.

'To—to a relation of—'

'She refused Sir Pitt,' cried the victim. 'Speak at once. Don't drive me mad.'

'O, Ma'am—prepare her, Miss Briggs—she's married to Rawdon Crawley.'

'Rawdon married—Rebecca—governess—nobod—Get out of my house, you fool, you idiot—you stupid old Briggs—how dare you? You're in the plot—you made him marry, thinking that I'd leave my money from him—you did, Martha,' the poor old lady screamed in hysteric sentences.

—E *îndrăgostită de altcineva*... gâfâi Briggs. Oh, scumpele mele prietene, ea s-a și măritat!

—Da, s-a și măritat, confirmă doamna Bute; și rămaseră amândouă cu mâinile încrucișate, uitându-se când una la alta, când la victima lor.

—Trimiteți-o la mine de îndată ce sosește! Mica mizerabilă...cum de-a îndrăznit să nu-mi spună nimic? urlă domnișoara Crawley.

—N-are să sosească așa de curând. Pregătește-te, scumpă prietenă... ea a plecat pentru timp mai îndelungat... ea a... ea a plecat definitiv!

-Pentru numele lui Dumnezeu, și cine-are să-mi mai pregătească ciocolata? Trimiteți după ea și s-o aducă numaidecât înapoi; vreau să vină înapoi! porunci bătrâna domnișoară.

—A șters-o azi-noapte! Strigă doamna Bute.

—Și a lăsat o scrisoare pentru mine! Exclamă Briggs. Ea s-a măritat cu...

—Pregătește-o mai întâi, pentru Dumnezeu! N-o chinui atâta, dragă domnișoară Briggs.

—Cu cine s-a măritat? strigă bătrâna domnișoară, în culmea nervozității.

—Cu...cu o rudă a...

—Doar l-a refuzat pe sir Pitt! strigă iar victima. Vorbește odată! Nu mă scoate din fire!

'I, Ma'am, ask a member of this family to marry a drawing-master's daughter?'

'Her mother was a Montmorency,' cried out the old lady, pulling at the bell with all her might.

'Her mother was an opera-girl, and she has been on the stage or worse herself,' said Mrs Bute.

Miss Crawley gave a final scream, and fell back in faint. They were forced to take her back to the room which he had just quitted. One fit of hysterics succeeded another. The doctor was sent for—the apothecary arrived. Mrs Bute took up the post of nurse by her bedside. 'Her relations ought to be round about her,' the amiable woman said.

(in *Vanity Fair* 197-8)

—Oh, doamnă...pregătește-o, domnișoară Briggs...s-a măritat cu Rawdon Crawley.

—Rawdon... însurat... Rebecca... o guvernantă... niciodată! Afară din casa mea, Briggs, nebuno, idioato, babă tâmpită, cum de îndrăznești? Faci și tu parte din complot, tu l-ai silit să se însoare, crezând că-n felul ăsta n-am să-i mai las nici un ban, tu ai făcut asta, Martha! țipă sărmana bătrână în scurte fraze isterice.

—Eu, doamnă, tocmai eu să cer unui membru al familiei acesteia să se însoare cu fata unui profesor de desen?

—Mama ei era o Montmorency! zbieră bătrâna doamnă, trăgând de cordonul clopoțelului cu toată forța.

—Mama ei era dansatoare la Operă și a jucat pe scenă, dacă nu cumva și mai rău, rosti doamna Bute.

Domnișoara Crawley scoase un țipăt final și leșină. Cele două prietene fură silite s-o ducă înapoi în camera pe care abia o părăsise. Atacurile de nervi urmară unul după altul. Doctorul fu chemat, spițerul sosi de asemenea. Doamna Bute luă în primire postul de infirmieră, rămas acum liber.

—Toate rudele ar trebui să fie roată în jurul ei, fu de părere această caritabilă femeie.

[Traducere de Constanța Tănăsescu, Editura Rao Clasic, București, 2003]

Bringing the Old Lady Round

În care toate personajele se hotărăsc să părăsească Brightonul

Rebecca Sharp is trying to get round old and rich Miss Crawley who, furious that her nephew Rawdon married against her wishes, disinherited him and refused to see him any more. For Rebecca, making up with Miss Crawley and the subsequent perspective that her husband should still inherit the spinster's money is something crucial. In this respect, Rawdon himself and the soft spot that the old lady still had for her inept nephew are invaluable assets Rebecca is determined to use.

*Remarkable are the portraits of Becky Sharp as a clever, fox-like social upstart who wouldn't shy from anything to attain her goals and Rawdon as a stupid and easily manageable, *Goofy-like man. The following fragment is a humorous illustration of Rebecca's shrewd method of handling her husband to achieve her goal, as well as the latter's reasoning capacity.*

[Rebecca's] hopes were very high: she made her husband share them. She generally succeeded in making her husband share her opinions, whether melancholy or cheerful.

'You will now, if you please, my dear, sit down at the writing table and pen me a pretty little letter to Miss Crawley, in which you'll say that you are a good boy, and that sort of thing.' So Rawdon sat down, and wrote off, 'Brighton, Thursday,' and 'My dear Aunt,' with great rapidity: but there the gallant officer's imagination failed him. He mumbled the end of his pen, and looked up in his wife's face. She could not help laughing at his *rueful countenance, and marching up and down the room with her hands behind her, the little woman began to dictate a letter,

Speranțele ei erau foarte mari și îl sili și pe soțul ei să se împărtășească din ele. În genere, ea izbutea să-l facă pe Rawdon să-i împărtășească toate gândurile, fie melancolice, fie vesele.

—Iar acuma ai să te așezi, rogu-te, dragul meu, la masa de scris și ai să-mi compui o scrisorică pentru domnișoara Crawley, în care ai să-i spui că ești un băiat tare bun și alte lucruri asemănătoare.

Astfel că Rawdon se așeză și scrise *„Brighton, joi"* și *„scumpa mea mătușă"*, în mare viteză; dar aici imaginația bravului ofițer se poticni. Începu să roadă capătul condeiului și o privi pe nevasta lui drept în față. Ea nu se putu stăpâni să nu izbucnească în râs văzând mutra lui jalnică, și, plimbându-se de-a lungul și

which he took down.

'Before quitting the country and commencing a campaign, which very possibly may be fatal—'

'What?' said Rawdon, rather surprised, but took the humour of the phrase, and presently wrote it down with a grin.

'Which very possibly may be fatal, I have come hither—'

'Why not say come here, Becky? come here's grammar,' the dragoon interposed.

'I have come hither,' Rebecca insisted, with a *stamp of her foot, 'to say farewell to my dearest and earliest friend. I *beseech you before I go not perhaps to return, once more to let me press the hand from which I have received nothing but kindnesses all my life.'

'Kindnesses all my life,' echoed Rawdon, scratching down the words, and quite amazed at his own faculty of composition.

'I ask nothing from you but that we should not part in anger. I have the pride of my family on some points, though not on all. I married a painter's daughter, and am not ashamed of the union.'

'No, run me through the body if I am!', Rawdon *ejaculated.

'You old *booby,' Rebecca said, pinching her ear and looking over to see that he made no mistakes in spelling—beseech is not spelt with an *a*, and earliest is.' So he altered these words, bowing to the superior knowledge of his little *Missis.

de-a latul camerei cu mâinile la spate, micuța doamnă începu să dicteze o scrisoare, pe care el o așternu numaidecât pe hârtie:

—„Înainte de-a părăsi țara și de-a începe o campanie care e foarte posibil să-mi fie fatală..."

—Cum? zise Rawdon cam mirat, dar sesizând umorul frazei, o scrise numaidecât, rânjind.

—„care e foarte posibil să-mi fie fatală, am venit încoace..."

—De ce nu spui „am venit aici", Becky? ,, Am venit aici" e mai gramatical, interveni dragonul.

—„Am venit încoace", insistă Rebecca, bătând din picior, „să-mi iau rămas bun de la cea mai scumpă și mai veche prietenă a mea. Și te rog fierbinte ca înainte de-a pleca, poate fără să mă mai reîntorc, să-mi îngădui să strâng încă o data mâna de la care toată viața mea n-am primit decât bucurii..."

—„...toată viața mea n-am primit decât bucurii", repetă Rawdon, mâzgălind cuvintele astea și minunându-se de ușurința lui de a compune.

—„Nu-ți cer nimic altceva decât îngăduința de-a nu ne despărți supărați. Eu am orgoliul familiei mele în anumite privințe, dar nu chiar în toate. M-am însurat cu fiica unui pictor, dar nu mi-e rușine de căsătoria asta."

—Nu, poți să mă tai în două dacă-mi este! exclamă Rawdon.

'I thought that you were aware of the progress of my attachment,' Rebecca continued: 'I knew that Mrs Bute Crawley confirmed and encouraged it. But I make no reproaches. I married a poor woman, and am content to *abide by what I have done. Leave your property, dear Aunt, as you will. *I* shall never complain of the way in which you dispose of it. I would have you believe that I love you for yourself, and not for money's sake. I want to be reconciled to you ere I leave England. Let me, let me see you before I go. A few weeks or months hence it may be too late, and I cannot bear the notion of quitting the country without a kind word of farewell from you.'

'She won't recognise my style in *that*,' said Becky. I made the sentences short and brisk on purpose.' And this authentic missive was dispatched under cover to Miss Briggs.

Old Miss Crawley laughed when Briggs, with great mystery, handed over this candid and simple statement. 'We may read it now Mrs Bute is away,' she said. 'Read it to me, Briggs.'

When Briggs had read the epistle out, her patroness laughed more. 'Don't you see, you goose,' she said to Briggs, who *professed to be too much touched by the honest affection which pervaded the composition, 'Don't you see that Rawdon never wrote a word of it? He never wrote to me without asking for money in his life, and all his letters are full of bad spelling, and dashes, and bad grammar. It is that little serpent of a governess

—Nătărăule, zise Rebecca, trăgându-l de ureche și uitându-se să vadă dacă a făcut greșeli de ortografie, *fierbinte* se scrie cu *ie*, și se spune *veche*, nu *vece*.

Așa că el îndreptă toate cuvintele astea închinându-se în fața nemaipomenitei științe a micuței sale stăpâne.

—„Eu credeam că dumneata ești la curent cu dragostea mea," continuă Rebecca. „Știam că doamna Bute Crawley era de acord cu sentimentul acesta al meu și îl încuraja. Dar nu fac imputări nimănui. M-am însurat cu o femeie săracă și sunt foarte mulțumit de hotărârea mea. Fă tot ce crezi de cuviință cu averea dumitale, draga mea mătușă, și după cum dorești. Eu n-am să mă plâng niciodată de felul în care ai să dispui de ea. Aș vrea să te încredințez că eu te iubesc pentru dumneata însăți, nu de dragul banilor dumitale, și aș dori să mă împac cu dumneata înainte de-a părăsi Anglia. Îngăduie-mi, îngăduie-mi să te văd înainte de-a pleca. Peste câteva săptămâni sau peste câteva luni are să fie prea târziu și nu sunt în stare să îndur gândul de a părăsi țara fără un binevoitor cuvânt de adio de la dumneata." N-are să-mi recunoască stilul în scrisoarea asta, zise Becky. Am făcut intenționat numai fraze scurte și vioaie.

Și această autentică misivă fu pusă în plic și expediată imediat domnișoarei Briggs.

Bătrâna domnișoară Crawley începu să râdă când Briggs, cu o înfățișare plină de mister, îi înmână această nevinovată și

who rules him.' They are all alike, Miss Crawley thought in her heart. They all want me dead, and are hankering for my money.

'I don't mind seeing Rawdon,' she added, after a pause, and in a tone of perfect indifference. 'I'd just as soon shake hands with him as not. Provided there is no scene, why shouldn't we meet? I don't mind. But human patience has its limits; and mind, my dear, I respectfully decline to receive Mrs Rawdon—I can't support *that* quite'—and Miss Briggs was *fain to be content with this half-message of conciliation; and thought that the best method of bringing the old lady and her nephew together, was to warn Rawdon to be in waiting on the Cliff, when Miss Crawley went out for her air in her chair.

There they met. I don't know whether Miss Crawley had any private feeling of regard or emotion upon seeing her old favourite; but she held out a couple of fingers to him with as smiling and good-humoured an air, as if they had met only the day before. And as for Rawdon, he turned as red as scarlet, and *wrung off Brigg's hand, so great was his rapture and his confusion at the meeting. Perhaps it was his interest that moved him: or perhaps affection: perhaps he was touched by the change which the illness of the last weeks had *wrought in his aunt.

'The old girl has always acted like a *trump to me,' he said to his wife, as he narrated the interview, 'and I felt, you know, rather queer, and that sort of thing. I walked by the side of the

sinceră expunere.

—Acuma o putem citi, căci doamna Bute e departe, zise ea. Citește-mi-o, Briggs!

După ce Briggs citi scrisoarea, protectoarea ei începu să râdă și mai tare.

—Nu vezi, gâscă ce ești, spuse ea domnișoarei Briggs, care părea cât se poate de mișcată de sincera afecțiune care străbătea compoziția, nu vezi că Rawdon n-a scris nici un cuvânt din toată asta? El nu mi-a scris niciodată fără să-mi ceară bani, și toate scrisorile lui sunt pline de greșeli de ortografie, de ștersături și de greșeli gramaticale. Șerpoaica aceea mică de guvernantă face din el tot ce poftește.

„Toți sunt la fel, își spuse domnișoara Crawley în sinea ei. Toți îmi doresc moartea și suspină după banii mei."

—Nu mi-e teamă să-l văd pe Rawdon, adăugă ea după un răstimp de tăcere și pe un ton de perfectă nepăsare. Mi-e totuna dacă-i întind mâna sau nu. Cu condiția să nu iasă de-aici cine știe ce scenă, de ce nu ne-am întâlni, adică? Mie puțin îmi pasă. Dar răbdarea omenească își are și ea limitele ei; și bagă de seamă, draga mea, eu declin cu mult respect onoarea de-a o primi pe doamna Rawdon, pe *asta* n-o pot suporta cu nici un chip! și domnișoara Briggs fu silită să se mulțumească cu acest semimesaj de împăcare și socoti că cel mai bun mijloc pentru a-i pune față în față pe bătrâna doamnă și pe nepotul ei era acela de

*what-d'ye-call-'em, you know, and to her own door, where Bowls came to help her in. And I wanted to go in very much only—'

'*You didn't go in*, Rawdon?' screamed his wife.

'No, my dear; I'm hanged if I wasn't afraid when it came to the point.'

'You fool! you ought to have gone in and never come out again,' Rebecca said.

'Don't *call me names,' said the big Guardsman sulkily. 'Perhaps I *was* a fool, Becky, but you shouldn't say so;' and he gave his wife a look, such as his countenance could wear when angered, and such as was not pleasant to face.

'Well, dearest, to-morrow you must be on the look-out, and go and see her, mind, whether she asks you or no,' Rebecca said, trying to soothe her angry *yoke-mate. On which he replied that he would do exactly as he liked, and would just thank her to keep a civil tongue in her head—and the wounded husband went away, and passed the *forenoon at the billiard-room, sulky, silent and suspicious.'

(in *Vanity Fair* 310-2)

a-l sfătui pe Rawdon s-a aștepte pe domnișoara Crawley pe faleză, când iese să ia aer în scaunul ei cu rotile.

Acolo s-au și întâlnit. Nu știu dacă domnișoara Crawley a încercat vreun sentiment deosebit de afecțiune sau de emoție dând cu ochii de vechiul ei favorit; dar îi întinse două degete cu un aer atât de surâzător și cu atâta voioșie, ca și cum s-ar fi văzut în ajun. Cât despre Rawdon, el se făcu roșu ca un rac și îi smulse aproape mâna domnișoarei Briggs, într-atât era de entuziasmat și de încurcat în timpul acestei întâlniri. Poate că substratul emoției lui era interesul; sau poate afecțiunea; sau poate că era impresionat de schimbarea pe care boala o adusese în ultimele săptămâni pe fața mătușii sale.

—Bătrâna domnișoară s-a purtat întotdeauna cu mine în mod foarte generos, îi spuse el soției sale în timp ce îi relata întrevederea, iar eu mă simțeam, înțelegi, nu tocmai în apele mele, nici eu nu știu bine cum să-ți spun. Am mers tot timpul alături de cum naiba-i zice, știi tu, până la ușa ei, când a venit Bowls ca s-o ajute, și tare-aș mai fi vrut să intru și eu, numai că...

—*Și n-ai intrat*, Rawdon! țipă nevastă-sa.

—Nu, draga mea; al naibii să fiu dacă nu mi-a fost frică atunci când am ajuns la o adică.

—Neghiobule, ar fi trebuit să intri și să nu mai ieși de-acolo niciodată! zise Rebecca.

—Nu mă ocărî, îi răspunse morocănos voinicul ofițer de

gardă, se prea poate *să fi fost* neghiob, Becky, dar nu trebuie să mi-o arunci așa, în față! Și se uită la nevastă-sa cu o căutătură așa cum nu putea s-o facă decât un om ca el când era înfuriat, căutătură pe care n-o înfruntai cu plăcere.

—Ei bine, dragul meu, mâine trebuie să-ți iei în primire postul de observație și să intri s-o vezi, fie că te poftește sau nu înăuntru, îl sfătui Rebecca, încercând să-l domolească pe înfuriatul ei tovarăș de viață.

La care el răspunse c-o să facă exact ce socotește el că trebuie făcut și că i-ar fi recunoscător dacă s-ar purta ceva mai politicos; și soțul jignit plecă și-și petrecu după-amiaza în sala de biliard, morocănos, tăcut și bănuitor.

[Traducere de Constanța Tănăsescu, Editura Rao Clasic, București, 2003]

History and Vanities

The fragment inserted below narrates the time before the historic episode of the Battle of Waterloo. As Levine remarks (72), very much in the novel – its development and the fate of its characters – is associated with Napoleon and his defeat at Waterloo, though neither of them is foregrounded. Instead of the heroism and grand rendering of the events associated with the battle, the readers are offered a cynical, mundane congregation of people whose only care is to go on with their vanities a few steps away from the battle place.

Those who like to lay down the History-book, and to speculate upon what *might* have happened in the world, but for the fatal occurrence of what actually did take place (a most puzzling, amusing, ingenious, and profitable kind of meditation), have no doubt often thought to themselves what a specially bad time Napoleon took to come back from *Elba, and to let loose his eagle from Gulf San Juan to Notre Dame. The historians on our side tell us that the armies of the allied powers were all providentially on a war-footing, and ready to bear down at a moment's notice upon the Elban Emperor. The august *jobbers assembled at Vienna, and carving out the kingdoms of Europe according to their wisdom, had such causes of quarrel among themselves as might have set the armies which had overcome Napoleon to fight against each other, but for the return of the object of unanimous hatred and fear. This monarch had an army in full force because he had jobbed to himself Poland, and was determined to keep it: another had robbed half

În care Amelia năvălește în Țările de Jos

Cei cărora le place să lase deoparte cartea de istorie și să facă speculații asupra lucrurilor care *ar fi putut* să se întâmple dacă n-ar fi intervenit evenimentul fatal care a avut loc în realitate (mod de-a medita cât se poate de enigmatic, amuzant, ingenios și folositor) s-au gândit, fără îndoială, în sinea lor la momentul deosebit de neprielnic pe care l-a ales Napoleon ca să se întoarcă de pe Elba și să-și sloboadă vulturul din golful San Juan către Notre-Dame. Istoricii noștri ne spun că armatele puterilor aliate erau toate și în mod providențial pe picior de război, gata să-l zdrobească în cel mai scurt timp pe împăratul de pe Elba. Auguștii speculanți adunați la Viena, care tăiau regatele Europei în bucăți, potrivit înțelepciunii lor, aveau destule motive să se încaiere între ei și să facă armatele care-l învinseseră pe Napoleon să se lupte între ele dacă nu le-ar fi fost teamă de întoarcerea obiectului urii lor și a dușmăniei generale. Cutare monarh își avea armate pe picior de război pentru că îngenunchease Polonia și era hotărât s-o păstreze pentru el; altul

Saxony, and was bent upon maintaining his acquisition: Italy was the object of a third's solicitude. Each was protesting against the rapacity of the other; and could the *Corsican but have waited in prison until all these parties were by the ears, he might have returned and reigned unmolested. But what would have become of our story and all our friends, then? If all the drops in it were dried up, what would become of the sea?

In the meanwhile the business of life and living, and the pursuits of pleasure, especially, went on as if no end were to be expected to them, and no enemy in front. When our travellers arrived at Brussels, in which their regiment was quartered, a great piece of good fortune, as all said, they found themselves in one of the gayest and most brilliant little capitals in Europe, and where all the Vanity Fair booths were laid out with the most tempting liveliness and splendour. Gambling was here in profusion, and dancing in plenty: feasting was there to fill with delight that great gourmand of a Jos: there was a theatre where a miraculous *Catalani was delighting all hearers: beautiful rides, all enlivened with martial splendour; a rare old city, with strange costumes and wonderful architecture, to delight the eyes of little Amelia, who had never before seen a foreign country, and fill her with charming surprises: so that now and for a few weeks' space in a fine handsome lodging, whereof the expenses were borne by Jos and Osborne, who was flush of money and

jefuise jumătate din Saxonia și avea toate motivele să-și mențină achiziția; iar un al treilea era foarte îngrijorat de soarta Italiei. Fiecare striga împotriva rapacității celuilalt; și dacă corsicanul n-ar fi făcut altceva decât să aștepte acolo la închisoare până ce toate părțile interesate s-ar fi azvârlit una asupra alteia, el s-ar fi putut reîntoarce și pune mâna pe putere nestingherit de nimeni. Dar ce s-ar fi întâmplat atunci cu istoria noastră și cu toți prietenii noștri? Dacă toți stropii din ea s-ar usca, ce s-ar întâmpla cu marea?

În timpul acesta, preocupările vieții și ale existenței, și mai cu seamă goana după plăceri, își urmau cursul ca și cum nu se aștepta nimeni ca el să aibă vreun sfârșit și ca și cum dușmanul nu le-ar fi stat în față. Când călătorii noștri ajunseră la Bruxelles, unde era încartiruit regimentul lor—nemaipomenit chilipir, cum spuneau toți—se pomeniră într-una din cele mai vesele și mai strălucitoare capitale din Europa, unde Bâlciul deșertăciunilor își întinsese toate barăcile în mijlocul celei mai ademenitoare voioșii și măreții. Joc de cărți se găsea aici din abundență, și dans, din belșug; ospețe erau berechet ca să-l sature și să-l încânte pe acest mare mâncău de Jos; era și un teatru unde nemaipomenita Catalani[1] își umplea ascultătorii de desfătare; preumblări de toată frumusețea, însuflețite toate de-o războinică strălucire; un minunat oraș vechi, cu costume ciudate și o arhitectură uimitoare, spre încântarea ochilor micii Amelia,

full of kind attentions to his wife—for about a fortnight, I say, during which her honeymoon ended, Mrs. Amelia was as pleased and happy as any little bride out of England.

Every day during this happy time there was novelty and amusement for all parties. There was a church to see, or a picture-gallery—there was a ride, or an opera. The bands of the regiments were making music at all hours. The greatest folks of England walked in the Park—there was a perpetual military festival. George, taking out his wife to a new *jaunt or *junket every night, was quite pleased with himself as usual, and swore he was becoming quite a domestic character. And a jaunt or a junket with *him*! Was it not enough to set this little heart beating with joy? Her letters home to her mother were filled with delight and gratitude at this season. Her husband bade her buy laces, *millinery, jewels, and *gimcracks of all sorts. Oh, he was the kindest, best, and most generous of men!

The sight of the very great company of lords and ladies and fashionable persons who thronged the town, and appeared in every public place, filled George's truly British soul with intense delight. They flung off that happy frigidity and insolence of demeanour which occasionally characterises the great at home, and appearing in numberless public places, condescended to mingle with the rest of the company whom they met there. One night at a party given by the general of the division to which

care nu mai văzuse niciodată înainte de asta o țară străină, lucruri care o umpleau de-o uluire plină de farmec; astfel că în momentul acela, și încă vreo câteva săptămâni după asta, ocupând o splendidă locuință, ale cărei cheltuieli se împărțeau între Jos și Osborne, care avea bani din belșug și era plin de atenții gingașe față de nevasta lui, timp de câteva săptămâni, zic, în cursul cărora luna ei de miere luă sfârșit, doamna Amelia fu tot atât de mulțumită și de fericită ca orice altă mireasă din Anglia.

Fiecare zi din timpul acestei preafericite epoci însemna o noutate sau o petrecere pentru ei toți. Era de văzut când o biserică, când o galerie de tablouri, se punea la cale vreo plimbare sau se mergea la Operă. Fanfarele regimentului cântau toată vremea. Cei mai de seamă oameni din Anglia se plimbau prin parc—era o veșnică sărbătoare militară. George, luându-și în fiecare seară nevasta la o nouă excursie sau petrecere, era cât se poate de încântat de sine, ca de obicei, și se jura că devenise de-un temperament cu desăvârșire casnic. O excursie sau o petrecere cu *el!* Oare nu era de ajuns pentru a umple de fericire această inimioară? Scrisorile ei, trimise în epoca aceasta doamnei Sedley, acasă, erau pline de mulțumire și de recunoștință pentru vremea petrecută acolo. Soțul ei o îndemna să-și cumpere coliere, articole de lux, bijuterii și tot felul de fleacuri. Oh, el era cel mai drăguț, mai bun și mai generos dintre oameni!

George's regiment belonged, he had the honour of dancing with Lady Blanche Thistlewood, Lord Bareacres' daughter; he bustled for ices and refreshments for the two noble ladies; he pushed and squeezed for Lady Bareacres' carriage; he bragged about the Countess when he got home, in a way which his own father could not have surpassed. He called upon the ladies the next day; he rode by their side in the Park; he asked their party to a great dinner at a restaurateur's, and was quite wild with exultation when they agreed to come. Old Bareacres, who had not much pride and a large appetite, would go for a dinner anywhere.

(in *Vanity Fair* 339-40)

Faptul că putea admira în voie societatea lorzilor, a soţiilor lor şi a altor personaje din lumea mare, care se înghesuiau în oraş şi apăreau în toate localurile publice, umplu sufletul cu adevărat britanic a lui George de o desfătare fără margini. Căci aceştia nu făceau caz de acea fericită răceală şi trufaşă purtare ce caracterizează, întâmplător, pe cei mai mari la ei acasă şi, apărând în nenumăratele localuri publice, catadicseau să se amestece cu restul societăţii pe care-o întâlneau acolo. Într-o seară, la o serată dată de comandantul diviziei din care făcea parte regimentul lui George, el avu cinstea să danseze cu lady Blanche Thistlewood, fiica lordului Bareacres; şi se înghesui la bufet să le servească pe cele două nobile doamne cu îngheţată şi răcoritoare; se luptă şi se îmbulzi ca să fie trasă la scara trăsura ladyei Bareacreas; iar când ajunse acasă, el se lăudă cu contesa într-un fel în care nici tatăl său nu l-ar fi putut întrece. A doua zi făcu doamnelor o vizită; în parc călări lângă trăsura lor; le invită la un dineu de gală într-un restaurant şi fu nebun de bucurie când acestea primiră. Bătrânul Bareacres, care n-avea prea multă mândrie, dar o uriaşă poftă de mâncare, ar fi mers la masă cu oricine.

[Traducere de Constanţa Tănăsescu, Editura Rao Clasic, București, 2003]

Charlotte Brontë

(1816-1855)



Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855) was the daughter of an Irish-born Anglican clergyman, who moved with his wife, Maria Branwell Brontë, and their six small children to Haworth amid the picturesque Yorkshire moors in 1820, as the local rector. Soon after, Mrs Brontë and the two eldest children (Maria and Elizabeth) died, leaving the father to care for the remaining three girls—Charlotte, Emily, and Anne—and a boy, Patrick Branwell. Their upbringing was aided by an austere aunt, Elizabeth Branwell, who left her native Cornwall and took up residence with the family at Haworth.

In 1824 Charlotte and Emily attended the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge in Lancashire together with their elder sisters, Maria and Elizabeth, one year before their deaths. This school is the prototype for Lowood School in *Jane Eyre*.

Charlotte and Emily returned home in June 1825, and for more than five years the Brontë children learned and played there, writing and telling romantic tales for one another whose setting is fabled distant lands (such as Angria or Gondal) and playing imaginative games at home or on the desolate moors.

In 1831 Charlotte was sent to Miss Wooler's school at Roe Head, where she stayed a year but where she was to return 1835 as a teacher hoping to improve thus her family's material position. The need to pay Branwell's debts also urged her to spend some months as governess.

Meanwhile the three sisters had planned to open a school together, which their aunt had agreed to finance, and in February 1842 Charlotte and Emily went to Brussels as pupils to improve their qualifications in French and acquire some German. There they met Constantin Héger, a fine teacher and a man of unusual perception with whom Charlotte developed a special relationship. For Charlotte the time spent at Brussels was crucial for her development as writer—she received a strict literary training, became aware of the resources of her own nature, and gathered material that served her, in various shapes, for all her novels.

In the autumn of 1845 Charlotte came across some poems by Emily, and this led to the publication of a joint volume of *Poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell* (1846), or Charlotte, Emily, and Anne. The pseudonyms were assumed to preserve secrecy and avoid the special treatment that they believed reviewers accorded to women. The book, issued at their own expense, received few reviews and only two copies were sold. Nevertheless, a way of becoming writers had opened to them. Charlotte's first novel was *The Professor: A Tale*; her second was *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography*. The novel was published in 1847 and had an immediate success, far greater than that of the books that her sisters published the same year.

The months that followed were tragic ones. Branwell died in September 1848, Emily in December, and Anne in May 1849. Charlotte completed *Shirley: A Tale* in the empty parsonage, and it appeared in October.

In the following years Charlotte went three times to London as the guest of her publisher; there she met the novelist William Makepeace Thackeray. She also visited her future biographer, Mrs Elizabeth Gaskell, in Manchester and entertained her at Haworth. *Villette* came out in January 1853.

Charlotte married Arthur Bell Nichols, her father's curate, an Irishman, on June 29, 1854, in Haworth church. He did not share his wife's intellectual life, but she was happy to be loved for herself and to take up her duties as his wife. She began another book, *Emma*, of which some pages remain. Her pregnancy, however, was accompanied by exhausting sickness, and she died in 1855. Charlotte Brontë's novels combine romanticism with satiric realism, sharing secrets and establishing communion with the reader. Many people consider her (Cutitaru 50) a precursor of feminism and psychological analysis—feminism in her attempt to re-assert the position of the woman in society and the delicacy and ardour of sentiment in her studies of love; psychological analysis in the incisiveness of her investigation of the hidden recesses of the human soul.

From *Jane Eyre*

The book is the story of a woman craving for love but able to renounce it when self-respect and morality demand it. The woman is Jane Eyre, the book's narrator and main character. The novel is an exploration of the educational system, hypocrisy, humiliation and bigotry of Victorian times, the story of a rebel against the mentality of the age, a study of the dichotomy between Passion and Reason, a romantic tale of love and suffering. It is certainly a novel of substance in spite of its melodramatic touches and episodes of Gothic extraction.

Jane Eyre, the woman who raises her voice against old morality and the need for a better and full life is Charlotte herself. Both embody that type of woman who does not consider herself inferior to man but wants her life to be as she wants.

Mr Rochester, 'an ideal of strong and ruthless masculinity' (Chew and Altick in Baugh 1374), is a strong and dominating personality, depicted by a woman who did not know very much of men, except her experience with Professor Constantin Héger and her life with the brother Patrick Branwell.

The Red Room

According to Galea (115), the novel is constructed as a succession of episodes that reiterate the motif of the red room – of enclosure and escape. All of Jane's life will be placed under her horrible experience lived in this red room of Mrs Reed's house in which she is locked by her aunt as a punishment for her 'misbehaviour'. This episode is inserted below. Lowood Asylum, Thornfield Hall and St. John's home are all variants of the red room – in all these places Jane feels as a captive in the hands of Mr Brocklehurst, Mr Rochester and John Rivers. But Jane wants to be a liberated and independent woman, hence the urge to break free from all these places of confinement. Significant and loaded with symbolism is the fact that Jane will find her happiness with Mr Rochester only when Thornfield Hall has been reduced to ashes and his dominance has consequently disappeared.

Daylight began to forsake the red-room; it was past four o'clock, and the beclouded afternoon was tending to drear twilight. I heard the rain still beating continuously on the staircase window, and the wind howling in the grove behind the hall; I grew by degrees cold as a stone, and then my courage sank. My habitual mood of humiliation, self-doubt, forlorn depression, fell damp on the embers of my decaying fire. All said I was wicked, and perhaps I might be so; what thought had I been but just conceiving of starving myself to death? That certainly was a crime: and was I fit to die? Or was the vault under the *chancel of Gateshead Church an inviting *bourne? In such vault I had been told did Mr. Reed lie buried; and led by this thought to recall his idea, I dwelt on it with gathering dread. I could not remember him; but I knew that he was my own uncle—my mother's brother—that he had taken me when a parentless infant to his house; and that in his last moments he had required a promise of Mrs. Reed that she would rear and maintain me as one of her own children. Mrs. Reed probably considered she had kept this promise; and so she had, I dare say, as well as her nature would permit her; but how could she really like an interloper not of her race, and unconnected with her, after her husband's death, by any tie? It must have been most *irksome to find herself bound by a *hard-wrung pledge to stand

Lumina zilei începea să scadă în odaia roșie. Trecuse de ora patru și norii care acopereau cerul trebuiau să aducă în curând un amurg posomorât. Auzeam ploaia bătând mereu în geamurile scării și vântul urlând în desișul dindărătul holului. Încetul cu încetul mă făcui rece ca piatra și pierdui tot curajul. Obișnuita mea umilință, îndoiala, descurajarea omului părăsit căzură ca ploaia rece pe cenușa caldă încă a mâniei mele stinse. Toți spuneau că aveam porniri rele și poate era adevărat: nu plăsmuisem eu oare gândul de a mă lăsa să mor de foame? Asta ar fi fost cu siguranță o crimă. Și eram oare pregătită să mor? Or cripta de sub altarul bisericii din Gateshead era un liman ademenitor! Mi se spusese că domnul Reed era înmormântat acolo. Gândurile îmi aduseseră astfel în minte chipul mortului; începui să stărui asupra acestei imagini cu o spaimă crescândă. Nu puteam să mi-l amintesc, dar știam că-mi fusese unchi, fratele mamei, că mă luase la el când rămăsesem o biată orfană și în ultimele sale clipe ceruse doamnei Reed să-i promită că voi fi crescută ca și copiii lor. Doamna Reed credea fără îndoială că și-a ținut cuvântul și aș spune chiar că și l-a ținut, atât cât îi îngăduia firea. Cum ar fi putut să mă vadă cu încântare încălcând drepturile copiilor săi, pe mine, care, după moartea soțului ei, nu eram prin nimic legată de dânsa? Trebuie să-i fi fost tare neplăcut că se legase printr-un jurământ silit să fie

*in the stead of a parent to a strange child she could not love, and to see an *uncongenial alien permanently intruded on her own family group.

A singular notion dawned upon me. I doubted not—never doubted—that if Mr. Reed had been alive he would have treated me kindly; and now, as I sat looking at the white bed and overshadowed walls—occasionally also turning a fascinated eye towards the dimly *gleaming mirror—I began to recall what I had heard of dead men, troubled in their graves by the violation of their last wishes, revisiting the earth to punish the perjured and avenge the oppressed; and I thought Mr. Reed's spirit, harassed by the wrongs of his sister's child, might quit its *abode—whether in the church vault or in the unknown world of the departed—and rise before me in this chamber. I wiped my tears and hushed my sobs, fearful lest any sign of violent grief might waken a *preternatural voice to comfort me, or elicit from the gloom some haloed face, bending over me with strange pity. This idea, consolatory in theory, I felt would be terrible if realised: with all my might I *endeavoured to *stifle it—I endeavoured to be firm. Shaking my hair from my eyes, I lifted my head and tried to look boldly round the dark room; at this moment a light gleamed on the wall. Was it, I asked myself, a ray from the moon penetrating some aperture in the blind? No; moonlight was still, and this stirred; while I gazed, it glided up

mama unei copile pe care nu o putea iubi și să-și vadă astfel viața de familie în permanență stingherită de o străină a cărei prezență nu era nimănui plăcută.

Un gând ciudat miji în mintea mea. Nu mă îndoiam—nu mă îndoisem niciodată—că, dacă domnul Reed ar fi trăit, s-ar fi purtat bine cu mine, iar acum, pe când priveam patul acoperit cu pătura albă, pereții cuprinși încetul cu încetul de umbra nopții și-mi îndreptam, dând din când în când, privirea fascinată spre oglinda ce nu mai reflecta decât contururi întunecate, începui să-mi amintesc ce auzisem spunându-se despre morții care, tulburați în morminte prin încălcarea ultimelor lor dorinți, se întorc pe pământ spre a pedepsi pe cei ce-și calcă jurământul și a răzbuna pe cel obijduit. Mă gândeam că duhul domnului Reed, hărțuit de suferințele copilului surorii sale, își va părăsi poate lăcașul, fie c-ar fi sub bolțile bisericii, fie în lumea necunoscută a morților și se va ivi în fața mea în acea odaie. Îmi ștersei lacrimile și-mi înăbușii suspinele, temându-mă ca nu cumva semnele unei dureri prea puternice să trezească un glas supranatural care să mă mângâie, sau să facă să iasă din beznă vreun chip înconjurat de aureolă care să se aplece spre mine cu o milă ciudată. Simțeam că aceste lucruri, atât de alinătoare în poveste, ar fi grozave dacă s-ar înfăptui. Mă silii din răsputeri să înlătur acest gând și să fiu tare. Scuturându-mi părul de pe ochi, mi-am înălțat capul și am încercat să privesc curajoasă în jurul

to the ceiling and quivered over my head. I can now *conjecture readily that this *streak of light was, in all likelihood, a gleam from a lantern carried by some one across the lawn: but then, prepared as my mind was for horror, shaken as my nerves were by agitation, I thought the swift darting beam was a herald of some coming vision from another world. My heart beat thick, my head grew hot; a sound filled my ears, which I *deemed the rushing of wings; something seemed near me; I was oppressed, suffocated: endurance broke down; I rushed to the door and shook the lock in desperate effort. Steps came running along the outer passage; the key turned, Bessie [the nurse] and Abbot [Bessie's maid] entered.

'Miss Eyre, are you ill?' said Bessie.

'What a dreadful noise! it went quite through me!' exclaimed Abbot.

'Take me out! Let me go into the nursery!' was my cry.

'What for? Are you hurt? Have you seen something?' again demanded Bessie.

'Oh! I saw a light, and I thought a ghost would come.' I had now got hold of Bessie's hand, and she did not snatch it from me.

'She has screamed out on purpose,' declared Abbot, in some disgust.

'And what a scream! If she had been in great pain one would

meu.

În clipa aceea, o lumină se prelinse de-a lungul peretelui. Mă întrebam dacă nu era o rază de lună strecurată printre jaluzele. Nu, razele lunii erau neclintite: fâșia de lumină se clătina. Pe când priveam, lumina alunecă pe tavan și prinse să tremure deasupra capului meu. Azi sunt gata să cred că această fâșie de lumină era flacăra unui felinar purtat de cineva care trecea pe pajiște; dar atunci, simțind spaima cuprinzându-mi inima și biciuindu-mi nervii, luai acea rază țâșnită fugar drept vestitorul unei vedenii venite de pe celălalt tărâm. Inima îmi bătea cu putere, capul îmi ardea. Un sunet ce semăna cu un fâlfâit de aripi ajunse până la urechile mele. Lângă mine părea că se află ceva... Simțeam ca o apăsare pe piept și mă-năbușeam; nu mai putui îndura... Mă năpustii în ușă, scuturai clanța cu o stăruință deznădăjduită. Auzii pași alergând înspre odaia mea. Cheia fu răsucită în broască. Bessie și domnișoara Abbot intrară.

—Ți-e rău, domnișoară Eyre? întrebă Bessie.

—Ce zgomot îngrozitor! M-a cuprins spaima, exclamă domnișoara Abbot.

—Luați-mă! Lăsați-mă să mă duc în odaia copiilor, strigai.

—De ce? Te-ai lovit? Ai văzut ceva? întrebă din nou Bessie.

—Oh! Am văzut o lumină și am crezut că o să vină o stafie.

O apucasem pe Bessie de mână și ea nu și-o retrase.

—Ai strigat fără nici un rost, spuse domnișoara Abbot cu un

have excused it, but she only wanted to bring us all here: I know her naughty tricks.'

'What is all this?' demanded another voice *peremptorily; and Mrs. Reed came along the corridor, her cap flying wide, her gown rustling stormily. 'Abbot and Bessie, I believe I gave orders that Jane Eyre should be left in the red-room till I came to her myself.'

'Miss Jane screamed so loud, ma'am,' pleaded Bessie.

'Let her go,' was the only answer. 'Loose Bessie's hand, child: you cannot succeed in getting out by these means, be assured. I abhor artifice, particularly in children; it is my duty to show you that tricks will not answer: you will now stay here an hour longer, and it is only on condition of perfect submission and stillness that I shall liberate you then.'

'O aunt! have pity! Forgive me! I cannot endure it—let me be punished some other way! I shall be killed if—

'Silence! This violence is all most repulsive:' and so, no doubt, she felt it. I was a precocious actress in her eyes; she sincerely looked on me as a compound of virulent passions, mean spirit, and dangerous duplicity.

Bessie and Abbot having retreated, Mrs. Reed, impatient of my now frantic anguish and wild sobs, abruptly thrust me back and locked me in, without farther parley. I heard her sweeping away; and soon after she was gone, I suppose I had a species of

fel de scârbă. Și ce zbierete! Ar putea fi iertată dacă ar fi suferit mai mult, dar voia numai să venim încoa. Cunosc eu prefăcătoriile ei viclene.

—Ce înseamnă toate astea? întrebă un glas autoritar, și doamna Reed sosi pe coridor. Boneta ei flutura și mersul grăbit făcea să-i foșnească rochia. Bessie și Abbot, mi se pare că v-am poruncit s-o lăsați pe Jane în odaie până când voi veni s-o iau eu.

—Domnișoara Jane striga așa de tare! îndrăzni Bessie.

—Lăsați-o! Haide, fetițo, n-o mai ține pe Bessie de mână. Fii sigură că nu vei izbuti prin tertipuri de astea. Disprețuiesc prefăcătoria mai ales la copii, și e de datoria mea să-ți dovedesc că prin șiretenie nu vei dobândi niciodată nimic. Vei sta aici o oră mai mult și-ți vei recăpăta libertatea numai cu condiția unei supuneri și liniști desăvârșite.

—Oh! mătușă! Fie-ți milă de mine! Iartă-mă! Nu mai pot îndura; pedepsește-mă altfel! Am să mor aici...

—Taci! Înverșunarea asta îmi face greață!

Și fără îndoială că așa simțea. Mă socotea o comediană precoce; credea, cu toată sinceritatea, că sunt o ființă în care se găseau amestecate patimi aprinse, un spirit josnic și o fățărnicie primejdioasă.

Bessie și Abbot ieșiră din odaie. Doamna Reed, scoasă din răbdări de spaima și lacrimile mele, mă îmbrânci, zorită, înăuntru și mă închise, fără să spună măcar un cuvânt. O auzii

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fit: unconsciousness closed the scene.

(in *Jane Eyre* 16-8)

plecând. Cred că am avut atunci un fel de leșin, căci nu-mi amintesc ce a urmat.

[Traducere de Paul B. Marian și D. Mazilu, Editura Eminescu, București, 1972]

The Mad Woman in the Attic

Another motif recurrent in the novel is that of the mad woman in the attic – a symbol of the oppressed, confined or enslaved woman without the liberty of her choice. The mad woman is Bertha Mason, Mr Rochester's wife of Caribbean origin. It is because of her madness that Mr Rochester decided to have her locked in the attic and place her in the care of Grace Poole. One night while at Thornfield Hall, Jane hears strange noises and soon realizes that someone has set the manor on fire. The episode is one of the Gothic scenes of the novel.

The man woman in the attic has been used by contemporary feminists (such as Susan Gubar and Sandra Gilbert) as an emblem in their discussion of the state of dependence and constraint of the woman in a world governed by men.

I hardly know whether I had slept or not after this musing; at any rate, I started wide awake on hearing a vague murmur, peculiar and lugubrious, which sounded, I thought, just above me. I wished I had kept my candle burning: the night was drearily dark; my spirits were depressed. I rose and sat up in bed, listening. The sound was hushed.

I tried again to sleep; but my heart beat anxiously: my inward tranquillity was broken. The clock, far down in the hall, struck two. Just then it seemed my chamber-door was touched; as if fingers had swept the panels in groping a way along the dark gallery outside. I said, 'Who is there?' Nothing answered. I was chilled with fear.

All at once I remembered that it might be Pilot [Mr Rochester's dog], who, when the kitchen-door chanced to be left open, not unfrequently found his way up to the threshold of Mr.

Nu știu dacă după ce m-am gândit la toate astea am adormit sau nu; dar deodată am tresărit, pe de-a-ntregul trează, la auzul unui murmur nedeslușit, străin și lugubru, care mi se părea ca vine chiar de deasupra mea. Regretam că nu lăsasem lumânarea aprinsă; noaptea era întunecoasă și simțeam cum mă cuprinde spaima. M-am ridicat, m-am așezat în capul oaselor și am ascultat. Zgomotul încetase.

Încercai să adorm iar, dar inima îmi bătea cu putere; nu-mi mai puteam afla liniștea. Ceasul de jos, din holul cel mare, bătu ora două. În acea clipă mi se păru că o mână atinge ușa mea, ca și cum ar fi vrut să pipăie drumul de-a lungul sălii întunecate. „Cine-i acolo?" am strigat. Nici un răspuns. Înghețasem de spaimă. Deodată mi-am amintit că ar putea fi Pilot, care venea adeseori, când se întâmpla ca ușa bucătăriei să rămână deschisă, și se culca la ușa domnului Rochester. Îl găsisem chiar eu de

Rochester's chamber: I had seen him lying there myself in the mornings. The idea calmed me somewhat: I lay down. Silence composes the nerves; and as an unbroken hush now reigned again through the whole house, I began to feel the return of slumber. But it was not fated that I should sleep that night. A dream had scarcely approached my ear, when it fled affrighted, scared by a marrow-freezing incident enough.

This was a demoniac laugh—low, suppressed, and deep—uttered, as it seemed, at the very keyhole of my chamber door. The head of my bed was near the door, and I thought at first the goblin-laugher stood at my bedside—or rather, crouched by my pillow: but I rose, looked round, and could see nothing; while, as I still gazed, the unnatural sound was reiterated: and I knew it came from behind the panels. My first impulse was to rise and fasten the bolt; my next, again to cry out, 'Who is there?'

Something gurgled and moaned. *Ere long, steps retreated up the gallery towards the third-storey staircase: a door had lately been made to shut in that staircase; I heard it open and close, and all was still.

'Was that Grace Poole? and is she possessed with a devil?' thought I. Impossible now to remain longer by myself: I must go to Mrs. Fairfax [Mr Rochester's housekeeper]. I hurried on my frock and a shawl; I withdrew the bolt and opened the door with a trembling hand. There was a candle burning just outside, and

câteva ori acolo, dimineața când mă sculasem. Gândul acesta mă liniști întrucâtva și mă culcai din nou. Liniștea potolește nervii și, fiindcă o tăcere deplină stăpânea iarăși peste tot, am simțit cum mă cuprinde din nou somnul; dar în noaptea aceea nu-mi era dat să dorm. Când eram cât pe aci să mă afund în vise, fui îngrozită de un zgomot care-ți îngheța sângele în vine.

Un râs drăcesc—gros, înăbușit și adânc—izbucni, după cât se părea, chiar la ușa odăii mele. Capătul patului era lângă ușă și crezui o clipă că diavolul, care se strecurase până aici, sta la căpătâiul meu—ba chiar că se tupilase pe pernă. Mă sculai, privii în jurul meu, dar nu putui distinge nimic. Sunetul ciudat se auzi iar și înțelesei că venea din antreu. Primul meu gest a fost să pun zăvorul, al doilea să strig: „Cine-i acolo?” Auzii pe cineva mormăind și gemând, iar după o clipă pași îndepărtându-se din antreu către scara dinspre catul al treilea, a cărei ușă fu îndată deschisă și închisă. Apoi totul se liniști.

„Să fi fost Grace Poole? O fi stăpânită de diavoli?” mă întrebai. Nu mai puteam rămâne singură, trebuia să mă duc la doamna Fairfax. Îmi pusei o rochie și un șal, trăsei zăvorul și deschisei ușa tremurând. În coridor ardea o lumânare, lăsată pe preș. Fui mirată, dar uimirea mea crescu și mai mult când băgai de seamă că aerul era cețos, ca și cum ar fi fost plin de fum. M-am uitat în jurul meu să-mi dau seama de unde vine mirosul de ars pe care-l simțeam.

on the *matting in the gallery. I was surprised at this circumstance: but still more was I amazed to perceive the air quite dim, as if filled with smoke; and, while looking to the right hand and left, to find whence these blue *wreaths issued, I became further aware of a strong smell of burning.

Something creaked: it was a door ajar; and that door was Mr. Rochester's, and the smoke rushed in a cloud from thence. I thought no more of Mrs. Fairfax; I thought no more of Grace Poole, or the laugh: in an instant, I was within the chamber. Tongues of flame darted round the bed: the curtains were on fire. In the midst of blaze and vapour, Mr. Rochester lay stretched motionless, in deep sleep.

'Wake! wake!' I cried. I shook him, but he only murmured and turned: the smoke had stupefied him. Not a moment could be lost: the very sheets were *kindling, I rushed to his basin and ewer; fortunately, one was wide and the other deep, and both were filled with water. I heaved them up, deluged the bed and its occupant, flew back to my own room, brought my own water-jug, baptized the couch afresh, and, by God's aid, succeeded in extinguishing the flames which were devouring it.

The hiss of the *quenched element, the breakage of a pitcher which I flung from my hand when I had emptied it, and, above all, the splash of the shower-bath I had liberally *bestowed, roused Mr. Rochester at last. Though it was now dark, I knew he

Auzii o ușă scârțâind: era ușa de la camera domnului Rochester și de acolo ieșea un nor de fum. Nu m-am mai gândit la doamna Fairfax, nici la Grace Poole, nici la râsul acela straniu. Într-o clipă fui în odaia domnului Rochester. Perdelele erau în flăcări. În mijlocul flăcărilor și al fumului, domnul Rochester zăcea întins nemișcat, cufundat într-un somn adânc.

—Scoală-te! Scoală-te! îi strigai eu, scuturându-l. El mormăi ceva și se întoarse pe o parte; fumul îl înăbușise pe jumătate. Nu mai era nici o clipă de pierdut; focul cuprinsese cearșafurile. Alergai la lighean și cană; din fericire, amândouă erau mari și pline cu apă. Le-am răsturnat inundând patul și pe domnul Rochester. Am fugit înapoi în odaia mea, de unde am luat cana cu apă, am udat din nou patul și, cu ajutorul lui Dumnezeu, am izbutit să sting flăcările care-l cuprinseseră.

Sfârâitul focului ce se stingea, zgomotul pe care-l făcuse cana goală când o zvârlisem din mâini și mai ales răceala apei cu care-l stropisem îl treziră în sfârșit pe domnul Rochester. Deși acum era întuneric, mi-am dat seama că se deșteptase, deoarece l-am auzit izbucnind în blesteme groaznice, când se pomeni culcat într-o băltoacă.

—Ce-i asta, o inundație? exclamă el.

—Nu, domnule, răspunsei; dar a izbucnit focul. Sculați-vă, ați scăpat. Mă duc să aduc o lumânare.

—În numele tuturor zânelor creștinătății, tu ești, Jane Eyre?

was awake; because I heard him fulminating strange *anathemas at finding himself lying in a pool of water.

'Is there a flood?' he cried.

'No, sir,' I answered; 'but there has been a fire: get up, do; you are quenched now; I will fetch you a candle.'

'In the name of all the elves in Christendom, is that Jane Eyre?' he demanded. 'What have you done with me, witch, sorceress? Who is in the room besides you? Have you plotted to drown me?'

'I will fetch you a candle, sir; and, in Heaven's name, get up. Somebody has plotted something: you cannot too soon find out who and what it is.'

'There! I am up now; but at your peril you fetch a candle yet: wait two minutes till I get into some dry garments, if any dry there be—yes, here is my dressing-gown. Now run!'

I did run; I brought the candle which still remained in the gallery. He took it from my hand, held it up, and surveyed the bed, all blackened and scorched, the sheets drenched, the carpet round swimming in water.

'What is it? and who did it?' he asked. I briefly related to him what had transpired: the strange laugh I had heard in the gallery: the step ascending to the third storey; the smoke,—the smell of fire which had conducted me to his room; in what state I had found matters there, and how I had deluged him with all

întrebă el. Ce mi-ai făcut, mică vrăjitoare? Cine mai e cu dumneata în odaia asta? Ai vrut sa mă îneci?

—Mă duc să aduc o lumânare, domnule; dar, în numele cerului, sculați-vă! Cineva a încercat să vă omoare. Trebuie să aflați îndată cine-i și de ce a vrut să facă asta.

—Uite că m-am și sculat! Dar—deși te pun în primejdie—mai adă o lumânare. Așteaptă puțin să găsesc ceva haine uscate, dacă or mai fi. Oh! uite halatul meu. Acum aleargă!

Știu că am alergat! Am adus lumânarea ce rămăsese încă în antreu. El mi-o luă din mână, o ridică și cercetă patul înnegrit de fum și scorojit, cearșafurile muiate și arse, covorul ce înota în apă.

—Ce-i asta? Și cine a făcut-o? întrebă el.

Îi povesti pe scurt tot ce știam; îi vorbii despre râsul ciudat pe care-l auzisem pe sală, despre pașii care se îndreptaseră spre catul al treilea, despre fumul și mirosul de ars ce mă adusese în odaia lui, despre ce găsisem aici; îi spusei că pentru a stinge focul întrebuințasem toată apa pe care o găsisem.

M-a ascultat păstrând un aer foarte grav. Chipul lui—în timp ce eu povesteam—trăda mai mult tulburare decât mirare. După ce terminai ce aveam de spus, stătu câtva timp fără să scoată o vorbă.

—Vreți s-o vestesc pe doamna Fairfax? întrebai eu.

—Doamna Fairfax? Nu, la ce dracu s-o chemi? Ce ar putea

the water I could lay hands on.

He listened very gravely; his face, as I went on, expressed more concern than astonishment; he did not immediately speak when I had concluded.

'Shall I call Mrs. Fairfax?' I asked.

'Mrs. Fairfax? No; what the deuce would you call her for? What can she do? Let her sleep unmolested.'

'Then I will fetch Leah [the servant], and wake John [the butler] and his wife.'

'Not at all: just be still. You have a shawl on. If you are not warm enough, you may take my cloak yonder; wrap it about you, and sit down in the arm-chair: there,—I will put it on. Now place your feet on the stool, to keep them out of the wet. I am going to leave you a few minutes. I shall take the candle. Remain where you are till I return; be as still as a mouse. I must pay a visit to the second storey. Don't move, remember, or call any one.'

He went: I watched the light withdraw. He passed up the gallery very softly, unclosed the staircase door with as little noise as possible, shut it after him, and the last ray vanished. I was left in total darkness. I listened for some noise, but heard nothing. A very long time elapsed. I grew weary: it was cold, in spite of the cloak; and then I did not see the use of staying, as I was not to rouse the house. I was on the point of risking Mr.

face? Las-o să doarmă liniștită.

—Atunci să trezesc pe Leah, pe John și pe nevastă-sa.

—Nu, stai aici liniștită. Ai un șal pe dumneata. Dacă nu ți-e destul de cald, poți lua mantaua de colo. Înfășoară-te cu ea și stai în jilțul ăsta; acum pune picioarele pe scăunaș, să nu le uzi. Eu am să iau sfeșnicul și lumânarea și o să te las singură câteva minute. Stai aici până mă întorc; taci ca un șoarece. Trebuie să cercetez catul al treilea; dar ține minte: nu te clinti și nu chema pe nimeni.

Plecă; eu urmări câtva timp lumânarea depărtându-se. Străbătu antreul cu pași ușori, deschise încet de tot ușa scării, o închise după dânsul, și ultima rază se stinse. Eram părăsită într-un întuneric desăvârșit. Căutai să prind vreun zgomot, dar nu auzii nimic. Trecu foarte mult timp; eram obosită și-mi era frig, deși mă învelisem cu mantaua. Și apoi nu vedeam pentru ce era nevoie să rămân acolo, deoarece, oricum, nu mă gândeam să trezesc pe cineva. Eram cât pe ce să risc a-l nemulțumi pe domnul Rochester neascultându-i poruncile, când lumina luci din nou, nelămurită, pe peretele sălii și auzii picioarele sale desculțe pășind de-a lungul antreului. „Sper că-i el!"—îmi zisei—și nu ceva mai rău."

A intrat în cameră galben și foarte posomorât.

—Am descoperit totul, îmi spuse punând sfeșnicul pe lavoar. E chiar așa cum mi-am închipuit.

Rochester's displeasure by disobeying his orders, when the light once more gleamed dimly on the gallery wall, and I heard his unshod feet tread the matting. 'I hope it is he,' thought I, 'and not something worse.'

He re-entered, pale and very gloomy. 'I have found it all out,' said he, setting his candle down on the washstand; 'it is as I thought.'

'How, sir?'

He made no reply, but stood with his arms folded, looking on the ground. At the end of a few minutes he inquired in rather a peculiar tone—

'I forget whether you said you saw anything when you opened your chamber door.'

'No, sir, only the candlestick on the ground.'

'But you heard an odd laugh? You have heard that laugh before, I should think, or something like it?'

'Yes, sir: there is a woman who sews here, called Grace Poole,—she laughs in that way. She is a singular person.'

'Just so. Grace Poole—you have guessed it. She is, as you say, singular—very. Well, I shall reflect on the subject. Meantime, I am glad that you are the only person, besides myself, acquainted with the precise details of to-night's incident. You are no talking fool: say nothing about it. I will account for this state of affairs' (pointing to the bed): 'and now return to your own room. I shall

—Ce adică, domnule?

Nu răspunse, dar încrucișând brațele privi câteva clipe în podele. În cele din urmă, după mai multe minute, îmi zise pe un ton destul de ciudat:

—Nu-mi amintesc ce mi-ai spus c-ai văzut când ai deschis ușa odăii dumitale?

—Numai sfeșnicul, pus pe jos.

—Dar ai auzit un râs ciudat; înainte n-ai mai auzit râsul acela sau cel puțin ceva asemănător?

—Ba da, domnule, este aici o femeie, Grace Poole, care coase; ea râde în felul acesta. E o ființă ciudată.

—Chiar așa, Grace Poole. Ai ghicit: e foarte ciudată. Am să mă gândesc la cele petrecute. Sunt mulțumit că suntem singurii care cunoaștem amănuntele precise ale întâmplării din noaptea asta. Să nu flecărești; nu pomeni nimic despre asta. Voi lămuri eu totul, spuse el, arătând patul. Întoarce-te acum în odaia dumitale; pentru restul nopții, mie o să-mi fie de ajuns divanul din bibliotecă. E aproape patru; peste două ceasuri se vor trezi servitorii.

—Atunci, noapte bună, domnule, spusei eu, ridicându-mă.

[Traducere de Paul B. Marian şi D. Mazilu, Editura Eminescu, București, 1972]

do very well on the sofa in the library for the rest of the night. It is near four:—in two hours the servants will be up.'

'Good-night, then, sir,' said I, departing.

(in *Jane Eyre* 147-51)

I Will Not Be Yours

The fragment below is the dramatic scene when Jane and Mr Rochester confront each other. Jane has just found out about the existence of a Mrs Rochester, the mad woman in the attic, and her wedding to Mr Rochester has been cancelled. Mr Rochester is now with Jane in an attempt to describe the circumstances of his marriage to Bertha Mason, their life together, her madness and to convince Jane not to leave him.

The scene is an overt display of the conflict between Passion and Reason; Jane would like to go by her feelings but Reason, to which religious morality is added, takes over. She feels that staying with Mr Rochester as his lover would make her feel as his prisoner, hence her urge to break free and run away.

'Why are you silent, Jane?'

I was experiencing an ordeal: a hand of *fiery iron grasped my vitals. Terrible moment: full of struggle, blackness, burning! Not a human being that ever lived could wish to be loved better than I was loved; and him who thus loved me I absolutely worshipped: and I must renounce love and idol. One dear word comprised my intolerable duty—Depart!'

'Jane, you understand what I want from you? Just this promise—I will be yours, Mr Rochester.'

'Mr Rochester, I will *not* be yours.'

Another long silence.

'Jane,' recommenced he, with a gentleness that broke me down with grief, and turned me stone-cold with ominous terror—for this voice was the *pant of a lion rising—Jane, do you mean to go one way in the world, and to let me go another?'

—De ce taci, Jane?

Eram pusă la o cumplită încercare: o mână de fier înroșit îmi răscolea măruntaiele. Clipă cumplită, plină de zbucium, de negură, de clocot! Nici o făptură omenească nu putea dori să fie iubită mai frumos decât eram eu. Îl adoram pe cel care mă iubea astfel și totuși trebuia să renunț și la dragostea și la idolul meu. Un singur cuvânt înfricoșător închidea în el toată datoria mea neîndurată: „Despărțire!"

—Jane, înțelegi ce-ți cer; spune-mi doar: „O să fiu a dumitale, domnule Rochester".

—Nu voi fi a dumneavoastră, domnule Rochester.

Urmă o nouă tăcere lungă.

—Jane!—reluă el cu o blândețe ce-mi sfâșia inima și îmi strecura în sânge o groază care mă făcea rece ca gheața, fiindcă sub acest glas liniștit simțeam zvâcnirile leului—Jane, vrei să mă

'I do.'

'Jane' (bending towards and embracing me), 'do you mean it now?'

'I do.'

'And now?' softly kissing my forehead and cheek.

'I do'—*extricating myself from restraint rapidly and completely.

'Oh, Jane, this is bitter! This—this is wicked. It would not be wicked to love me.'

'It would be to obey you.'

A wild look raised his brows—crossed his features: he rose; but he *forbore yet. I laid my hand on the back of a chair for support: I shook, I feared—but I resolved.

'One instant, Jane. Give one glance to the horrible life when you are gone. All happiness will be torn away with you. What then, is left? For a wife I have but one maniac upstairs: as well might you refer me to some corpse in *yonder churchyard. What shall I do, Jane? Where turn for a companion, and for some hope?'

'Do as I do: trust in God and yourself. Believe in heaven. Hope to meet again there.'

'Then you will not *yield?'

'No.'

'Then you condemn me to live wretched, and to die

lași s-apuc pe o cale, iar tu să alegi alta?

—Da.

—Jane, reluă iar (aplecându-se spre mine și sărutându-mă) tot mai vrei să faci așa?

—Da.

—Și acum? urmă el, sărutându-mi cu duioșie fruntea și obrajii.

—Da, exclamai eu, desfăcându-mă repede din îmbrățișarea lui.

—Oh, Jane, ești crudă! Ești—ești rea! Doar n-ar fi un păcat să mă iubești.

—Ar fi un păcat să vă ascult.

O expresie sălbatică făcu să i se ridice sprâncenele și să i se crispeze obrazul. Se sculă, dar mai izbuti să se stăpânească. Îmi sprijinii mâna de spătarul scaunului. Mi-era teamă, tremuram, dar hotărârea mea era luată.

—O clipă, Jane. După ce vei fi plecat, aruncă o privire asupra oribilei mele vieți. Toată fericirea mea va dispărea o dată cu tine. Ce-mi rămâne de făcut? N-am tovarășă decât pe nebuna de sus: e ca și când mi-ai arăta un leș din cimitir. Ce să fac, Jane? Încotro să mă îndrept, ca să-mi găsesc o tovarășă? Unde să aflu nădejdea?

—Faceți ca mine: păstrați încrederea în Dumnezeu și voi înșivă: în viața de apoi. Nu pierdeți speranța că ne vom întâlni

*accursed?' His voice rose.

'I advise you to live sinless: and I wish you to die tranquil.'

'Then you snatch love and innocence form me? You fling me back on lust for a passion—vice for an occupation?'

'Mr Rochester, I no more assign this fate to you then I *grasp it for myself. We were born to strive and endure—you as well as I: do so. You will forget me before I forget you.'

'You make me a liar by such language: you *sully my honour. I declare I could not change: you tell me to my face I should change soon. And what a distortion in your judgement, what a perversity in your ideas, is proved by your conduct! Is it better to drive a fellow-creature to despair than to *transgress a mere human law—no man being injured by the *breach? for you have neither relatives nor acquaintances whom you need fear to offend by living with me.'

This was true: and while he spoke my very conscience and reason turned traitors against me, and charged me with crime in resisting him. They spoke almost as loud as Feeling: and they *clamoured wildly. 'Oh, *comply!' it said. Think of his misery; think of his danger—look at his state when left alone; remember his *headlong nature; consider the recklessness following on despair—*soothe him; save him; love him; tell him you love him and will be his. Who in the world cares for *you*? or who will be injured by what you do?'

acolo.

—Așadar, nu vrei să te îndupleci?

—Nu.

—Atunci mă osândești să trăiesc ca un nenorocit, să mor ca un blestemat?

Ridicase glasul.

—Vă sfătuiesc să trăiți fără păcat și vă doresc o moarte liniștită.

—Îmi smulgi dragostea și nevinovăția? Mă zvârli îndărăt în ghearele destrăbălării și îmi propui desfrâul drept orice îndeletnicire?

—Nu, domnule Rochester, nu vă osândesc la soarta asta, după cum nu mă osândesc nici pe mine. Și eu, și dumneavoastră suntem născuți să îndurăm și să luptăm; supuneți-vă, fără să vă cârtiți. Mă veți uita cu mult înainte de-a vă uita eu.

—Dacă-mi vorbești astfel, înseamnă că mă socotești un mincinos: îmi pătezi onoarea. Ți-am afirmat că nu mă voi schimba niciodată, și tu-mi spui de la obraz că nu o să mă schimb curând. Purtarea ta arată cât de greșit judeci și ce păreri eronate ai! E mai bine să arunci deznădejdea asupra unuia dintre semenii tăi, decât să calci o biată lege omenească, atunci când nimeni n-ar suferi din pricina asta? Tu n-ai nici rude, nici prieteni pe care să-ți fie teamă c-ai să jignești, rămânând cu mine.

Era adevărat. Și pe când vorbea, Judecata și Conștiința mă

Still indomitable was the reply—*I* care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more *unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself. I will keep the law given by God; sanctioned by man. I will hold to the principles received by me when I was sane, and not mad—as I am now. Laws and principles are not for the times when there is no temptation: they are for such moments as this, when body and soul rise in mutiny against their rigour. […]'

Mr Rochester […] crossed the floor and seized my arm, and grasped my waist. He seemed to devour me with his flaming glance: physically, I felt, at the moment powerless as *stubble exposed to the *draught and glow of a furnace—mentally, I still possessed my soul, and, with it the certain of ultimate safety. The soul, fortunately has an interpreter—often an unconscious, but still a truthful interpreter—the eye. My eye rose to his; and while I looked in his fierce face, I gave an involuntary sigh: his grip was painful, and my almost *over-tasked strength almost exhausted.

'Never,' said he, as he ground his teeth,' never was anything at once so frail and so indomitable. A mere reed she feels in my hand!' (And he shook me with the force of his hold.) 'I could bend her with my finger and thumb: and what good would it do if I bent, if I *uptore, if I crushed her? […] It is your spirit—with will and energy that I want: not alone your *brittle flame. Of

trădară și se întoarseră împotriva mea strigându-mi că sunt o criminală, dacă-l resping. Vorbeau aproape tot atât de tare ca și Simțirea, și toate împreună strigau sălbatic: „Oh! înduplecă-te, înduplecă-te! Gândește-te la suferința lui, gândește-te la primejdia ce-l pândește! Uită-te în ce stare îl părăsești! Amintește-ți de firea lui aprigă, gândește-te la urmările deznădejdii lui; mângâie-l, scapă-l, iubește-l! Spune-i că-l iubești și că vei fi a lui. Cui îi pasă de *tine?* Cine să fie jignit sau mâhnit de ce faci tu?"

Și totuși răspunsul a fost neînduplecat: „Mie îmi pasă de mine. Cu cât sunt mai singură, mai lipsită de prieteni și de sprijin, cu atât trebuie să mă respect mai mult. Voi păstra legile date de Dumnezeu și sfințite de om; voi rămâne credincioasă învățăturilor pe care le-am căpătat când eram cu mintea întreagă, nu nebună ca acum. Legile și învățăturile nu ne-au fost date pentru zilele senine. Au fost făurite pentru clipe cum este cea de față, când inima și sufletul se răzvrătesc împotriva străşniciei lor. Sunt aspre, dar vor rămâne neînfrânte. Dacă le-aș putea călca după bunul meu plac, ce preț ar mai avea? Totdeauna am crezut că sunt de mare preț; iar dacă n-o mai pot crede acum, asta-i pentru că sunt smintită—smintită de-a binelea, pentru că prin vine îmi curge foc, pentru că inima îmi bate prea repede ca să-i mai pot număra bătăile. În acest ceas de încercare trebuie să mă țin de părerile mai vechi, de hotărârile

yourself, you could come with soft flight and *nestle against my heart, if you would: seized against your will you will elude the grasp like an essence—you will vanish ere I inhale your fragrance. Oh! come, Jane, come!'

As he said this, he released me from his *clutch, and only looked at me. The look was far worse to resist than the frantic strain: only an idiot, however, would have *succumbed now. I had dared and *baffled his fury; I must elude his sorrow: I retired to the door.

'You are going, Jane?'

'I am going, sir.'

'You are leaving me?'

'Yes.'

'You will not come?—You will not be my comforter, my rescuer?—My deep love, my wild *woe, my frantic prayer, are all nothing to you?'

What unutterable pathos was in his voice! How hard it was to reiterate firmly, 'I am going.'

(in *Jane Eyre* 315-8)

luate dinainte și pe acest tărâm trainic o să-mi apăs cu nădejde piciorul!"

Așa și făcui. Domnul Rochester mă privi și-mi ghici numaidecât gândul. Se înfurie grozav și, fără să-i pese de urmări, se lăsă târât de mânia lui. Strabătu odaia, îmi luă brațul și mă cuprinse de mijloc. Părea că mă înghite cu privirea lui înflăcărată: fizicește mă simțeam neputincioasă ca un pui, pradă căldurii unui cuptor încins, dar mai eram stăpână pe sufletul meu și încercam sentimentul unei mare seninătăți. Din fericire, sufletul are un tălmaci, care adesea nu-și dă seama de ce face, dar care e totdeauna credincios: ochii. Ai mei se îndreptară spre obrazul sălbătăcit al domnului Rochester și oftai fără să vreau; strânsoarea lui era dureroasă, iar puterile mele aproape sleite.

—Niciodată, zise el scrâșnind din dinți, niciodată n-am văzut o ființă atât de slabă și atât de greu de îmblânzit. E în mâinile mele ca o trestie plăpândă! urmă el, scuturându-mă cu putere. Aș putea-o îndoi cu un singur deget; dar ce-aș folosi dacă aș face-o, dacă aș smulge-o din rădăcini, dacă aș călca-o în picioare? Priviți ochii aceștia, priviți făptura asta hotărâtă, sălbatică și liberă, a cărei privire parcă mă sfidează nu numai cu îndrăzneală, ci cu siguranța unui sobru triumf! Chiar dacă aș avea în stăpânire colivia, tot n-aș putea fi stăpân pe gingașa pasăre sălbatică! Dacă aș sfărâma șubreda închisoare n-aș face decât să dau libertate captivei. Aș putea cuceri cuibul; dar cea

care-l locuiește ar zbura spre înalt, înainte ca eu să pun stăpânire pe locuința ei de taină! Dar eu pe tine te vreau, suflet plin de voință și tărie, de virtute și curățenie, pe tine și nu doar învelișul tău fragil. Dacă ai vrea, ai putea să zbori în voie către mine și să te adăpostești la inima mea; dar dacă ai fi înfășcată cu silnicie, asemeni unui duh neprihănit, ai scăpa îmbrățișărilor mele, și-ai piere înainte de a-ți fi putut respira parfumul. Oh! vino, Jane, vino!

Rostind aceste cuvinte, îmi dădu drumul din strânsoare și se mulțumi să mă privească. Era mult mai greu să țin piept acelei priviri decât pasionatei îmbrățișări; dar acum numai o neroadă s-ar fi dat bătută. Îi sfidasem și-i înfrânsesem mânia; acum trebuia să-i suport durerea. Mă îndreptai spre ușă.

—Pleci, Jane?

—Da, domnule, plec.

—Mă părăsești?

—Da.

—Și n-o să te mai întorci? Nu vrei să fii sprijinitorul și mântuitorul meu? Dragostea mea adâncă, sfâșietoarea mea suferință, rugămințile mele fierbinți, toate astea nu înseamnă nimic pentru tine?

Ce nesfârșită durere era în glasul lui! Cât de greu mi-a fost să repet cu tărie:

—Plec.

[Traducere de Paul B. Marian și D. Mazilu, Editura Eminescu, București, 1972]

From *Shirley*

The novel narrates the story of a woman, Shirley Keeldar, who is determined to win her future in spite of all adversities. It is the first regional novel in English and one of the greatest, peopled with memorable characters (Alexander and Smith 461); it is a social panorama having as its background Yorkshire characters, church and chapel, the cloth workers and machine breakers of her father's early manhood – the so-called *Luddite Movement. According to Horsman (180-1), in its examination of the relation between employer, employee and unemployment, the novel is much less romantic than *Jane Eyre*, it is an account as 'cool, real and solid, […] as unromantic as Monday morning' (Ch. Brontë qtd. in Traversi 256).

As Horsman argues (181), Shirley shares much with Emily Brontë, whereas Caroline echoes Ann. These characters, placed at the centre of the novel, are meant to illustrate the author's point that the female has the power to think of herself.

The Riot

The extract is a dramatic scene in the novel: the attack of the oppressed workers – the famished and furious mass of the Operative Class' – on the mill of Robert Moore. Though Charlotte Brontë is an omniscient narrator in this novel, much of the scene is narrated indirectly – as the attack progresses, Shirley and Caroline watch it safely hidden behind a wall and report what they see and hear. They do not take sides, they only give expression to the strength and weakness of their position (Horsman 182). Therefore, the readers become aware of what is going on to the extent that the two heroines witness and report it.

As Gezari points out (xv), the implications of this narrative arrangement are on the one hand that women appear to be excluded from the scene of the industrial conflict, as if they belonged to another world and, on the other, that the workers are deprived of their own voices, everything

being reported.

'Shirley—Shirley, the gates are down! That crash was like the felling of great trees. Now they are pouring through. They will break down the mill doors as they have broken the gate: what can Robert do against so many? Would to God I were a little nearer him—could hear him speak—could speak to him! With my will—my longing to serve him—I could not be a useless burden in his way: I could be turned to some account.'

'They come on!' cried Shirley. 'How steadily they march in! There is discipline in their ranks—I will not say there is courage: hundreds against tens are no proof of that quality; but' (she dropped her voice) 'there is suffering and desperation enough amongst them—these *goads will urge them forwards.'

'Forwards against Robert—and they hate him. Shirley, is there much danger they will win the day?'

'We shall see. Moore and Helstone are of 'earth's first blood'—no *bunglers—no *cravens'—

A crash—smash—shiver—stopped their whispers. A simultaneously-hurled *volley of stones had saluted the broad front of the mill, with all its windows; and now every *pane of every *lattice lay in shattered and pounded fragments. A yell followed this demonstration—a rioters' yell—a North-of-England—a Yorkshire—a West-*Riding—a West-Riding-

—Shirley... Shirley... uite, porțile s-au prăbușit! Ai fi zis că un copac uriaș a fost trântit la pământ. Și-acu' năvălesc în curte. Au să sfărâme ușile fabricii așa cum au sfărâmat și poarta; ce poate face Robert împotriva unei asemenea mulțimi? De ar vrea Dumnezeu să fiu puțin mai aproape de el... să-i aud vorbele... să-i pot spune ceva! Cu voința mea—cu dorința fierbinte de a-i sta într-ajutor—ar fi cu neputință să-i devin o povară; într-un fel sau altul aș putea să-i fiu de folos.

—Uite-i că înaintează! strigă Shirley. Cu câtă hotărâre merg înainte! Și ce disciplină domnește în rândurile lor—n-aș spune că e și curaj; când sute de oameni pornesc împotriva a câtorva zeci, nu se poate vorbi de curaj, dar (și aici glasul aproape i se stinse) poți să vezi destulă suferință și deznădejde la oamenii ăștia—astea au să-i îmboldească să meargă tot înainte.

—Înainte înseamnă împotriva lui Robert—și știi cât îl urăsc Shirley, e mare primejdia ca ei să iasă învingători?

—O să vedem. Moore și Helstone, oameni „din cea mai tare vână a pământului"—nu-s tărâie brâu—nu-s papă lapte...

Un trosnet—o pocnitură—zgomot de sfărâmături le curmă șoaptele. O salvă concentrată de pietre azvârlite înspre fațada fabricii și ferestrele ei pricinuise toate cele auzite; și-acum toate geamurile ferestrelor cu gratii zăceau la pământ făcute țăndări.

clothing-district-of-Yorkshire rioters' yell. You never heard that sound, perhaps, reader? So much the better for your ears—perhaps for your heart; since, if it rends the air in hate to yourself, or to the men or principles you approve, the interests to which you wish well. Wrath wakens to the cry of Hate: the Lion shakes his mane, and rises to the howl of the Hyena: Caste stands up ireful against Caste; and the indignant, wronged spirit of the Middle Rank bears down in zeal and scorn on the famished and furious mass of the Operative class. It is difficult to be tolerant—difficult to be just—in such moments.

Caroline rose, Shirley put her arm round her: they stood together as still as the straight stems of two trees. That yell was a long one, and when it ceased, the night was yet full of the swaying and murmuring of a crowd.

'What next?' was the question of the listeners. Nothing came yet. The mill remained mute as a mausoleum.

'He cannot be alone!' whispered Caroline.

'I would stake all I have, that he is as little alone as he is alarmed,' responded Shirley.

Shots were discharged by the rioters. Had the defenders waited for this signal? It seemed so. The hitherto inert and passive mill woke: fire flashed from its empty window-frames; a volley of musketry pealed sharp through the Hollow.

'Moore speaks at last!' said Shirley, 'and he seems to have the

Un urlet urmă acestei dezlănțuiri—un urlet al răzvrătiților—al răzvrătiților din partea-de-nord-a-Angliei—din Yorkshire—din regiunea-de-apus—din regiunile-de-țesători-din-apusul-Yorkshire-ului. Probabil că niciodată n-ai auzit un astfel de urlet, cititorule! Cu atât mai bine pentru urechile tale—poate chiar pentru sufletul tău; căci dacă despică aerul cu o sabie de ură împotriva ta, sau a oamenilor ori principiilor susținute de tine și pentru ale căror interese subscrii din toată inima, atunci Mânia face să izbucnească strigătul Urii: Leul își scutură coama, se ridică și sloboade urletul Hienei; și-o Castă se ridică plină de mânie împotriva altei Caste; iar spiritul indignat, înșelat, al Rândurilor-de-mijloc se năpustește plin de înverșunare și dispreț împotriva înfometatei și furioasei mulțimi a Clasei-lucrătoare. În astfel de momente este greu sa fii tolerant—este greu să fii drept.

Caroline se ridică în picioare, iar Shirley o cuprinse în brațe; și amândouă rămaseră alături, la fel de drepte și la fel de neclintite ca niște trunchiuri de copac. Urletul acela se prelungi, și chiar după ce conteni, noaptea rămase înțesată de frământarea și murmurul mulțimii.

„De-acum ce-o să mai fie?" se întrebau cele două fete.

Nu se mai întâmplă nimic. Fabrica rămânea mută ca un mausoleu.

—E cu *neputință* să fie singur, șopti Caroline.

gift of tongues; that was not a single voice.'

'He has been forbearing; no one can accuse him of rashness,' alleged Caroline: 'their discharge preceded his: they broke his gates and his windows; they fired at his garrison before he repelled them.'

What was going on now? It seemed difficult, in the darkness, to distinguish, but something terrible, a still-renewing tumult, was obvious: fierce attacks, desperate repulses; the mill-yard, the mill itself, was full of battle movements: there was scarcely any cessation now of the discharge of firearms; and there was struggling, rushing, trampling, and shouting between. The aim of the assailants seemed to be to enter the mill, that of the defendants to beat them off. They heard the rebel leader cry, 'To the back, lads!' They heard a voice retort, 'Come round, we will meet you!'

'To the counting-house!' was the order again.

'Welcome!—We shall have you there!' was the response. And accordingly, the fiercest blaze that had yet glowed, the loudest rattle that had yet been heard, burst from the counting-house front, when the mass of rioters rushed up to it.

The voice that had spoken was Moore's own voice. They could tell by its tones that his soul was now warm with the conflict: they could guess that the fighting animal was roused in every one of those men there struggling together, and was for

—Aș pune rămășag pe tot ce am că e tot atât de puțin singur pe cât de puțin de speriat, răspunse Shirley.

Focuri de armă porniră din partea răzvrătiților. Oare acest semnal îl așteptaseră cei din fabrică? S-ar fi părut că da. Fiindcă până atunci inertă și pasivă, fabrica se trezi; flăcări țâșniră prin tocurile goale ale ferestrelor; o salvă de muschete bubui asurzitor peste Hollow.

—În sfârșit vorbește și Moore, spuse Shirley. Și s-ar părea că e înzestrat cu daruri ascunse: n-a vorbit cu un singur glas.

—Până acum n-a făcut nimic; nimeni nu-l poate învinui de nesocotință afirmă Caroline. Ei au tras mai întâi; ei i-au sfărâmat poarta și ferestrele; ei au tras împotriva oamenilor lui înainte ca ei să răspundă.

Dar ce se mai petrecea acum? Părea greu de deslușit prin întuneric, era limpede însă că se petrecea ceva cumplit, o zarvă și mai ințețită—atacuri înverșunate, rezistență disperată; curtea fabricii, fabrica însăși deveniseră câmp de bătălie; acum rareori se iveau răstimpuri de tăcere a armelor; și toată vremea veneau ecourile încăierărilor, ale alergăturilor, ale tropotelor și ale schimbului de focuri între cele două tabere. Ținta asalturilor părea să fie de a pătrunde în fabrică, iar a apărătorilor aceea de a-i împiedica. Îl auziră pe conducătorul răzvrătiților strigând: „Prin spate, băieți!" Și un glas răspunzând: „Veniți, că v-așteptăm!"

the time quite paramount above the rational human being.

Both the girls felt their faces glow and their pulses throb: both knew they would do no good by rushing down into the *mêlée: they desired neither to deal nor to receive blows; but they could not have run away—Caroline no more than Shirley; they could not have fainted; they could not have taken their eyes from the dim, terrible scene—from the mass of cloud, of smoke—the musket-lightning—for the world.

'How and when would it end?' was the demand throbbing in their throbbing pulses. 'Would a *juncture arise in which they could be useful?' was what they waited to see; for, though Shirley put off their too-late arrival with a jest, and was ever ready to satirise her own or any other person's enthusiasm, she would have given a farm of her best land for a chance of rendering good service.

The chance was not vouchsafed her; the looked-for juncture never came: it was not likely. Moore had expected this attack for days, perhaps weeks: he was prepared for it at every point. He had fortified and garrisoned his mill, which in itself was a strong building: he was a cool, brave man: he stood to the defence with unflinching firmness; those who were with him caught his spirit, and copied his demeanour. The rioters had never been so met before. At other mills they had attacked, they had found no resistance; an organised, resolute defence was what they never

—Spre clădirea administrației! Răsuna din nou ordinul.

—Poftiți! V-așteptăm și-acolo! se auzi răspunsul.

Și într-adevăr, cea mai puternică străfulgerare ce izbucnise până atunci, cel mai des răpăit de împușcături ce se auzise porni din față clădirii administrației, când răzvrătiții se avântară într-acolo.

Glasul care vorbise era glasul lui Moore însuși. După sunetul lui se putea spune că sufletul îi era prins în încrâncenarea bătăliei; se vedea limpede că instinctele se treziseră în toți cei care luptau acolo fără întrerupere și țineau cu totul în stăpânire ființa omenească rațională.

Amândouă fetele simțeau cum le ard obrajii și le zvâcnesc inimile; amândouă știau că n-ar fi avut nici un rost să se avânte și să se amestece în încleștare; nu doreau nici să dea și nici să primească lovituri—dar nici n-ar fi putut să plece de acolo, Caroline tot atât de puțin ca și Shirley. Nici n-ar fi putut leșina; nici nu-și puteau dezlipi ochii de pe scena aceea întunecată și cumplită, de la masa aceea de fum ca un nor adevărat, de la fulgerele muschetelor—pentru nimic în lume.

„Cum și când se va termina?" era întrebarea care se repeta cu fiecare înverșunată bătaie a inimii. „Se va ivi vreo situație în care ele să se poată dovedi de folos?"—asta așteptau să vadă; fiindcă, deși Shirley evita cu o simplă glumă să vorbească de sosirea lor cu întârziere și totdeauna ar fi fost gata să ironizeze entuziasmul

dreamed of encountering. When their leaders saw the steady fire kept up from the mill, witnessed the composure and determination of its owner, heard themselves coolly defied and invited on to death, and beheld their men falling wounded round them, they felt that nothing was to be done here. In haste, they mustered their forces, drew them away from the building: a roll was called over, in which the men answered to figures instead of names: they dispersed wide over the fields, leaving silence and ruin behind them. The attack, from its commencement to its termination, had not occupied an hour.

(in *Shirley* 289-91)

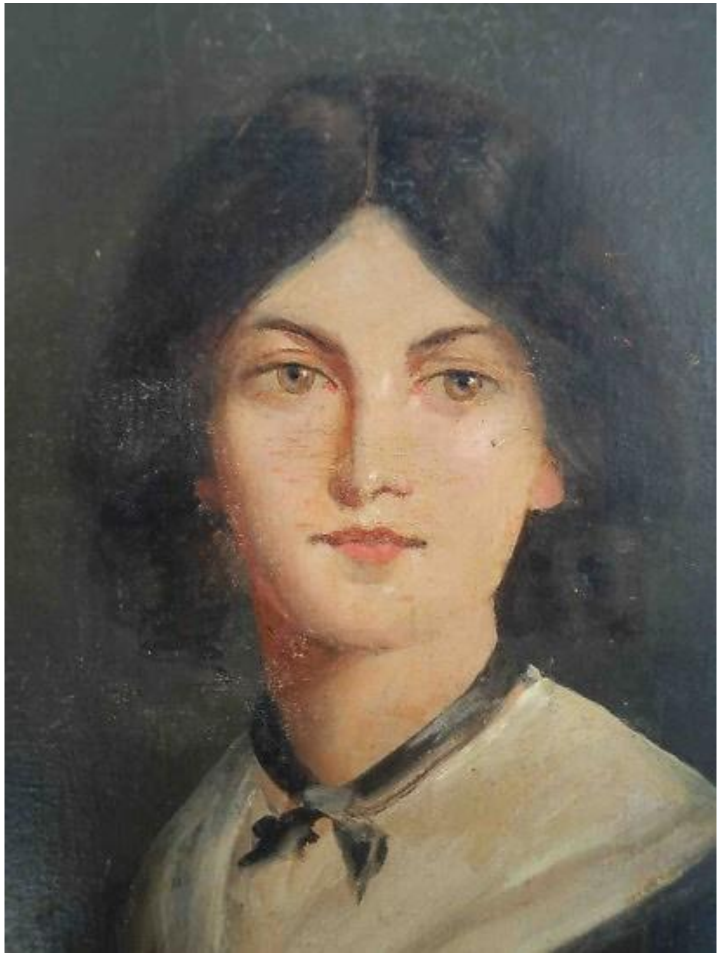
propriu sau al altora, ar fi dat o bună bucată din cel mai roditor pământ al ei pentru șansa de a putea fi de folos.

Dar șansa asta nu-i era menită; situația dorită nu se ivi; nici nu părea probabilă. Moore așteptase atacul acesta de zile, poate chiar săptămâni întregi; era pregătit să-i facă față în orice punct. Fortificase și își încadrase cu luptători fabrica întreagă, care oricum era o clădire solidă; era un om socotit și viteaz; și se apăra cu tărie de neclintit; cei ce luptau alături de el își însușiseră spiritul său și-i imitau purtările. Răzvrătiții nu mai fuseseră niciodată până atunci întâmpinați astfel. La alte fabrici pe care le atacaseră nu avuseseră de făcut față nici unei rezistențe; nici prin vis nu le-ar fi trecut că ar fi cu putință să întâlnească o apărare organizzată și hotărâtă. Când conducătorii lor au văzut focul viu pornit dinspre fabrică, au avut mărturia siguranței de sine și a hotărârii proprietarului, când s-au auzit pur și simplu chemați și sfidați să întâmpine moartea, și au văzut oameni din jurul lor căzând răniți, și-au dat seama că aici nu e nimic de făcut. Și-au adunat în grabă forțele și le-au retras departe de clădire; s-a făcut un apel în care oamenii răspundeau la numere și nu la nume; pe urmă s-au împrăștiat peste câmpuri, lăsând în urma lor tăcere și ruine. De la începutul și până la încheierea atacului nu trecuse nici măcar o oră.

[Traducere de Dumitru Mazilu, Editura Minerva, București, 1986]

Emily Brontë

(1818-1848)



Emily Brontë (1818-1848) was educated at home, like the other Brontë children during their early life, except for a single year that Charlotte and Emily spent at the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge in Lancashire. In 1835, when Charlotte found a teaching position at Miss Wooler's school at Roe Head, Emily accompanied her as a pupil but suffered from homesickness and remained only three months. In 1838 Emily spent six exhausting months as a teacher in Miss Patchett's school at Law Hill, near Halifax, and then resigned.

While she was in Brussels in 1842, together with Charlotte, Emily pined for home and for the wild moorlands. This is the reason why in October, however, when her aunt died, Emily returned permanently to Haworth.

The volume of *Poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell* that Charlotte published in 1846 contained 21 of Emily's poems; many critics agree on the fact that Emily's verse alone reveals true poetic genius.

Wuthering Heights, her single novel published in December 1847, raised a storm of protests—the critics as well as the reading public were hostile, calling it too savage, too animal-like, and clumsy in construction. It was not something they expected from a Victorian writer.

Soon after the publication of her novel, Emily's health began to fail rapidly. She had been ill for some time, but now her breathing became difficult, and she suffered great pain. She died of tuberculosis in December 1848.

Emily Brontë is a singular writer in the context of the Victorian novel, just like Gerard M. Hopkins is in that of Victorian poetry. Her writing is strange, with Romantic and Gothic overtones, loaded with the inscrutability of the moors and the bitterness, passion and violence of human action and the yearning for boundless spaces.

'Remembrance'

This poem belongs to the cycle of poems dedicated to the realm of Gondal, the mythical territory of Emily's imagination. According to Alexander and Smith (427), the speaker is Rosina Alcona who mourns the death of her prince, the emperor of Gondal. But actually the voice belongs to an unnamed person, suffering, hungry for the final rest and wishing to be reunited in death. The readers of Wuthering Heights can easily reverse genders and impersonate the speaker as Heathcliff when he, left alone after her death, goes to Catherine's grave, longing for her presence. Remarkable is the emotional load and the poetic expression given to the final moments of calmness coming after the ravaging storm has died out.

Cold in the earth—and the deep snow piled above thee,
Far, far removed, cold in the *dreary grave!
Have I forgot, my only Love, to love thee,
Severed at last by Time's all-severing wave?

Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer *hover
Over the mountains, on that northern shore,
Resting their wings where heath and fern-leaves cover
Thy noble heart for ever, ever more?

Cold in the earth—and fifteen wild Decembers
From those brown hills have melted into spring—
Faithful indeed is the spirit that remembers

After such years of change and suffering!

Sweet Love of youth, forgive if I forget thee
While the world's tide is bearing me along:
Other desires and hopes beset me,
Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong!

No later light has lingered up my heaven;
No second morn has ever shone for me:
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given—
All my life' bliss is in the grave with thee.

But, when the days of golden dreams had perished,
And even the Despair was powerless to destroy,
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,
Strengthened, and fed without the aid of joy;

Then did I check the tears of useless passion,
*Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine;
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten
Down to that tomb already more than mine!

And, even yet, I dare not let it languish,
Dare not indulge in Memory's rapturous pain;

Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
How could I seek the empty world again?

(in The Brontës, *High Waving Heather* 46-7)

From *Wuthering Heights*

Wuthering Heights is a singular and fascinating novel, distinguished from other novels of the period by its dramatic and poetic presentation, its depiction of fierce and consuming passion, as well as by the abstention from all comment by the author and its unusual structure. As Shires argues (66), *Wuthering Heights* is a novel situated between the material world and the spiritual one. It combines Romantic and Gothic fiction with will-powered personalities of violent individualism.

It is a story of passionate and thwarted love, betrayal, terrible revenge and destruction. And the spellbinding presence of the moors. Its main characters, Catherine and Heathcliff, have become prototypes for lovers whose love turns into unbearable and destructing passion pushed beyond the limits of rational understanding and human nature.

When the novel was published, the Victorian readers were taken aback by the fierceness of the character of Heathcliff and the wildness of the novel. Even when the horizon of expectation changed in later epoch, there were readers who found it difficult to accept this Heathcliff and his strange and fascinating love story with Catherine.

Let Me In

Because of the bad weather and the falling night Mrs Lockwood has to spend the night at Wuthering Heights. Zillah, the servant, offers him to sleep in Catherine's room. The episode underneath, with Gothic overtones (comparable with Jane Eyre's terrible night incident with Bertha Mason, the mad woman in the attic), is the chilling encounter of Mr Lockwood – who also narrates – with Catherine's ghost or just a frightening nightmare caused by bad tea.

The scene introduces an important symbolic representation in the novel – the window seen as division, demarcation line or barrier. The window also foretells a turning point in the novel's plot (Mengham 95).

I fastened my door and glanced round for the bed. The whole furniture consisted of a chair, a *clothes-press, and a large oak case, with squares cut out near the top resembling coach windows. Having approached this structure, I looked inside, and perceived it to be a singular sort of old-fashioned couch, very conveniently designed to obviate the necessity for every member of the family having a room to himself. In fact, it formed a little closet, and the *ledge of a window, which it enclosed, served as a table. I slid back the panelled sides, got in with my light, pulled them together again, and felt secure against the vigilance of Heathcliff, and every one else.

The ledge, where I placed my candle, had a few mildewed books piled up in one corner; and it was covered with writing scratched on the paint. This writing, however, was nothing but a name repeated in all kinds of characters, large and small—*Catherine Earnshaw*, here and there varied to *Catherine Heathcliff*, and then again to *Catherine Linton*.

In *vapid listlessness I leant my head against the window, and continued spelling over Catherine Earnshaw—Heathcliff—Linton, till my eyes closed; but they had not rested five minutes when a glare of white letters started from the dark, as vivid as spectres—the air swarmed with Catherines; and rousing myself to dispel the obtrusive name, I discovered my candle-wick reclining on one of the antique volumes, and perfuming the

Eu, la rându-mi, prea zdruncinat pentru a mai fi şi curios, închisei uşa şi-mi făcui ochii roată ca să-mi găsesc patul. Întregul mobilier se compunea dintr-un scaun, un scrin şi un dulap mare de stejar, în care erau tăiate, tocmai sus, câteva firide ce semănau cu ferestrele unui cupeu. Mă apropiai de această construcție şi, privind înăuntru, văzui că e un original pat de modă veche, făcut astfel încât să înlăture necesitatea ca fiecare membru al familiei să aibă o cameră separată. De fapt, patul forma o mică încăpere, iar polița interioară a unei ferestre servea drept masă. Deschizând tăbliile patului, intrai cu lumânarea aprinsă şi, după ce închisei tăbliile la loc, mă simții la adăpost față de curiozitatea lui Heathcliff şi a celorlalți ai casei.

Într-un colț al poliței pe care îmi aşezasem lumânarea, se afla un vraf de cărți mucegăite, iar polița toată era acoperită cu inscripții zgâriate în vopseaua ei. De fapt, nu era decât un singur nume scris cu diferite litere, mari şi mici: *Catherine Earnshaw*, ici şi colo *Catherine Heathcliff*, şi apoi iarăşi *Catherine Linton*.

Cuprins de toropeală, îmi rezemai capul de fereastră, silabisind mereu Catherine Earnshaw... Heathcliff... Linton... până când pleoapele mi se închiseră; dar n-am rămas nici cinci minute cu ochii închişi, şi în întuneric îmi apăru numele „Catherine” în litere albe, luminoase, roind ca nişte năluci vii; iar când m-am deşteptat, încercând să alung acest nume obsedant, am descoperit că fitilul lumânării mele se aplecase pe una din

place with an odour of roasted calf-skin. I snuffed it off, and, very ill at ease under the influence of cold and lingering nausea, sat up and spread open the injured tome on my knee. It was a Testament, in lean type, and smelling dreadfully musty: a fly-leaf bore the inscription—Catherine Earnshaw, her book,' and a date some quarter of a century back. I shut it, and took up another and another, till I had examined all. Catherine's library was select, and its state of dilapidation proved it to have been well used. […]

I remembered I was lying in the oak closet, and I heard distinctly the gusty wind, and the driving of the snow; I heard, also, the fir bough repeat its teasing sound, and ascribed it to the right cause: but it annoyed me so much, that I resolved to silence it, if possible; and, I thought, I rose and endeavoured to *unhasp the casement. The hook was *soldered into the staple: a circumstance observed by me when awake, but forgotten.

'I must stop it, nevertheless!' I muttered, knocking my knuckles through the glass, and stretching an arm out to seize the importunate branch; instead of which, my fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand!

The intense horror of nightmare came over me: I tried to draw back my arm, but the hand clung to it, and a most melancholy voice sobbed,

'Let me in—let me in!'

cărțile vechi şi că întreaga încăpere mirosea a piele de vițel arsă. Am rupt mucul fitilului şi, simțindu-mă foarte rău din pricina frigului şi a mirosului, m-am aşezat în capul oaselor şi am deschis pe genunchi tomul atins de flacără. Era o *Biblie* tipărită cu litere mici şi care mirosea îngrozitor de tare a mucegai. Foaia albă de la început purta inscripția „Catherine Earhshaw, cartea ei", şi o dată, cam cu un sfert de veac în urmă. O închisei şi luai alta, apoi alta, până când le cercetai pe toate. Catherine avea o bibliotecă aleasă, şi starea de uzură a cărților dovedea că le folosise mult. [...]

De data aceasta îmi dădeam seama că eram culcat în încăperea aceea strâmtă de stejar şi auzeam desluşit vântul năprasnic şi zăpada viscolind; auzeam, de asemenea, creanga de molift făcând mereu acelaşi zgomot supărător, numai că acum îi cunoşteam cauza adevărată. Mă enerva însă atât de tare, încât m-am hotărât să-i pun capăt dacă se poate; şi astfel m-am ridicat şi am încercat să deschid fereastra. Cârligul era înțepenit în belciug, lucru observat de mine în stare de veghe, dar uitat apoi.

—Orice-ar fi, trebuie să pun capăt zgomotului! murmurai şi, spărgând geamul cu pumnii, am scos afară un braț pentru a prinde creanga care mă supăra; dar în locul ei, degetele mele se încleştară pe degetele unei mâini mici, reci ca gheața! Cuprins de groaza înspăimântătoare a coşmarului, am încercat să-mi retrag brațul, dar mâna se agățase de brațul meu şi un glas de o

'Who are you?' I asked, struggling, meanwhile, to disengage myself.

'Catherine Linton,' it replied, shiveringly (why did I think of *Linton*? I had read *Earnshaw* twenty times for Linton)—

'I'm come home: I'd lost my way on the moor!'

As it spoke, I discerned, obscurely, a child's face looking through the window. Terror made me cruel; and, finding it useless to attempt shaking the creature off, I pulled its wrist on to the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bedclothes: still it wailed, 'Let me in!' and maintained its tenacious gripe, almost maddening me with fear.

'How can I!' I said at length. 'Let *me* go, if you want me to let you in!'

The fingers relaxed, I snatched mine through the hole, hurriedly piled the books up in a pyramid against it, and stopped my ears to exclude the lamentable prayer. I seemed to keep them closed above a quarter of an hour; yet, the instant I listened again, there was the *doleful cry moaning on!

'*Begone!' I shouted. 'I'll never let you in, not if you beg for twenty years.'

'It is twenty years,' mourned the voice: 'twenty years. I've been a waif for twenty years!'

Thereat began a feeble scratching outside, and the pile of books moved as if thrust forward.

melancolie sfâşietoare, plângând în hohote, spunea:

„Lasă-mă să intru, lasă-mă să intru!"

„Cine eşti?" întrebai, luptând între timp să-mi trag brațul.

„Catherine Linton, răspunse glasul tremurător. M-am întors acasă, am rătăcit pe coclauri!" (De ce m-am gândit la *Linton?* Citisem doar de douăzeci de ori *Earnshaw* şi numai o dată *Linton.*)

Pe când vorbea am zărit în întuneric o față de copil ce privea pe fereastră. Groaza mă umplu de cruzime şi, văzând că zadarnic încerc să mă desprind de această făptură, i-am tras mâna pe geamul spart, frecându-i încheietura de el, până când începu să curgă atâta sânge, de se udară aşternuturile. Dar ea se văita mai departe: „Lasă-mă să intru!" şi continua să mă strângă cu putere, aproape înnebunindu-mă de spaimă.

„Dă-mi drumul dacă vrei să te las să intri, i-am spus în cele din urmă — altfel n-am cum!"

Degetele i se desfăcură, eu mi-am tras mâna prin gaura geamului, am aşezat repede cărțile în stivă în fața geamului şi mi-am astupat urechile pentru a nu mai auzi rugămintea aceea sfâşietoare. Cred că am stat aşa, cu urechile astupate, cam un sfert de ceas; totuşi, când am ascultat din nou, plânsul acela jalnic nu contenise! „Pleacă de-aici! i-am strigat; n-am să te las să intri niciodată, chiar de m-ai ruga douăzeci de ani!" „Sunt douăzeci de ani de atunci, boci glasul, douăzeci de ani, douăzeci

I tried to jump up; but could not stir a limb; and so yelled aloud, in a frenzy of fright.

To my confusion, I discovered the yell was not ideal: hasty footsteps approached my chamber door; somebody pushed it open, with a vigorous hand, and a light glimmered through the squares at the top of the bed. I sat shuddering yet, and wiping the perspiration from my forehead: the intruder appeared to hesitate, and muttered to himself. At last, he said, in a half-whisper, plainly not expecting an answer,

'Is any one here?'

I considered it best to confess my presence; for I knew Heathcliff's accents, and feared he might search further, if I kept quiet.

With this intention, I turned and opened the panels. I shall not soon forget the effect my action produced. Heathcliff stood near the entrance, in his shirt and trousers; with a candle dripping over his fingers, and his face as white as the wall behind him. The first creak of the oak startled him like an electric shock: the light leaped from his hold to a distance of some feet, and his agitation was so extreme, that he could hardly pick it up.

'It is only your guest, sir,' I called out, desirous to spare him the humiliation of exposing his cowardice further. 'I had the misfortune to scream in my sleep, owing to a frightful nightmare. I'm sorry I disturbed you.'

de ani de când nu-mi mai găsesc locul!"

La aceste vorbe se auzi o uşoară zgârietură în fereastră, iar stiva de cărți se clătină, de parcă ar fi împins-o cineva. Am încercat să sar din pat, dar nu mă puteam urni din loc. Atunci, cuprins de o spaimă îngrozitoare, am început să urlu cât mă ținu gura. Spre marea-mi uluire, am descoperit că țipetele mele nu fuseseră numai ale visului, căci paşi grăbiți se apropiară de uşa camerei; o mână viguroasă o deschise, împingând-o cu putere, iar prin firidele tăiate în partea de sus a patului licări o lumină. M-am ridicat în capul oaselor, tremurând şi ştergându-mi sudoarea de pe frunte. Intrusul părea nedumerit şi bombănea ceva vorbind ca pentru el. În cele din urmă întrebă în şoaptă, ca şi cum nu s-ar fi aşteptat la vreun răspuns:

—E cineva aici?

Am socotit că e mai bine să-i mărturisesc prezența mea, căci, după tonul cu care vorbea Heathcliff, eram convins că dacă tac el îşi va continua cercetările. O dată hotărârea luată, m-am întors şi am deschis tăbliile patului. Va trece multă vreme până voi putea uita urmările acestui gest al meu.

Heathcliff stătea aproape de uşă în cămaşă şi pantaloni, ținând în mână o lumânare ce-i picura pe degete; iar obrazul îi era alb ca peretele de care se rezema. Prima scârțâitură a tăbliei patului îl cutremură ca un şoc electric. Lumânarea îi sări din mână la o depărtare de câțiva paşi şi era atât de tulburat, încât

'Oh, God confound you, Mr. Lockwood! I wish you were at the—' commenced my host, setting the candle on a chair, because he found it impossible to hold it steady.

'And who showed you up into this room?' he continued, crushing his nails into his palms, and grinding his teeth to subdue the maxillary convulsions. 'Who was it? I've a good mind to turn them out of the house this moment?'

(in *Wuthering Heights* 15-22)

abia o putu ridica.

—Sunt eu, musafirul dumneavoastră, domnule! i-am strigat, vrând să-i evit umilința de a-şi mai arăta spaima aceea cumplită. Am avut nenorocul să țip în somn din pricina unui coşmar îngrozitor. Îmi pare rău că v-am deranjat.

—Oh, bată-te Dumnezeu, domnule Lockwood! Mai bine te-ai fi dus la... începu gazda mea, punând lumânarea pe un scaun, deoarece nu era în stare s-o țină dreaptă în mână. Şi cine te-a adus în odaia asta? continuă, înfingându-şi unghiile în palmă şi scrâşnind din dinți pentru a-şi opri tremurul fălcilor. Cine te-a adus? Îmi vine să-l dau afară din casă chiar acum, în clipa asta!

[Traducere de Yvonne Stahl, Editura pentru literatură, București, 1962]

I Am Heathcliff

The cornerstone of the plot as well as the catalyst of events in the novel is the scene when Catherine is questioned by Ellen Dean – her nurse but also the episode's narrator – about her marriage prospects. In this context she asserts her 'oneness' with Heathcliff as the reason why marriage with him would be impossible. Her idea is generously pragmatic: to accept Edgar Linton as a rich husband and Heathcliff as a life mate to whom she could offer financial means and shelter. But its underlying postulate – If I love Edgar, and I am Heathcliff, then Heathcliff must love Edgar' – is utterly naïve. The subsequent result, the marital triangle with the two men in it, is an impossible construction because Edgar and Heathcliff are mutually exclusive and, consequently, cannot be co-existent.

The conversation between the two women and Catherine's confession are partially overheard and subsequently misinterpreted by Heathcliff, who takes Catherine's decision as betrayal and desertion. Consequently he decides to leave the Heights only to return years later to carry out his plans of revenge and destruction.

'This is nothing,' cried she [Catherine]: 'I was only going to say that heaven did not seem to be my home; and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights; where I woke sobbing for joy. That will do to explain my secret, as well as the other. I've no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven; and if the wicked man in there had not brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn't have thought of it. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now; so he shall never know how I love him: and that, not because he's handsome, Nelly, but because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are

– Asta nu-i nimic! strigă ea. Voiam numai să-ți spun că cerul nu mi s-a părut un sălaş potrivit pentru mine şi mi se rupea inima de plâns. Doream să mă întorc din nou pe pământ, iar îngerii s-au mâniat pe mine şi m-au azvârlit în mijlocul bălăriilor din vârful lui Wuthering Heights, unde m-am trezit plângând în hohote de fericire. Acest vis poate explica taina mea. Îmi place tot atât de puțin să mă mărit cu Edgar Linton, cât să fiu în cer, şi dacă păcătosul din odaia aceea nu l-ar fi adus pe Heathcliff în halul în care se află, nici prin gând nu mi-ar fi trecut s-o fac. Acum însă, dacă m-aş mărita cu Heathcliff, m-aş simți degradată, aşa că el nu va şti niciodată cât îl iubesc, nu pentru că-i frumos, Nelly, ci pentru că el e mai mult eu însămi decât

made of, his and mine are the same; and Linton's is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire.'

*Ere this speech ended I became sensible of Heathcliff's presence. Having noticed a slight movement, I turned my head, and saw him rise from the bench, and steal out noiselessly. He had listened till he heard Catherine say it would degrade her to marry him, and then he stayed to hear no further. My companion, sitting on the ground, was prevented by the back of the *settle from remarking his presence or departure; but I started, and bade her hush!

'Why?' she asked, gazing nervously round.

'Joseph is here,' I answered, catching opportunely the roll of his cartwheels up the road; 'and Heathcliff will come in with him. I'm not sure whether he were not at the door this moment.'

'Oh, he couldn't overhear me at the door!' said she. 'Give me Hareton, while you get the supper, and when it is ready ask me to sup with you. I want to cheat my uncomfortable conscience, and be convinced that Heathcliff has no notion of these things. He has not, has he? He does not know what being in love is!'

'I see no reason that he should not know, as well as you,' I returned; 'and if you are his choice, he'll be the most unfortunate creature that ever was born! As soon as you become Mrs. Linton, he loses friend, and love, and all! Have you considered how you'll bear the separation, and how he'll bear to be quite

sunt eu — eu însămi. Nu ştiu din ce sunt plămădite sufletele noastre, dar ştiu că al lui şi al meu sunt la fel, iar între al lui Linton şi al meu e o deosebire ca între o rază de lună şi un fulger, sau între gheață şi foc.

Înainte de-a isprăvi aceste vorbe, mi-am dat seama că Heathcliff se află în odaie. Simțind o mişcare uşoară, mi-am întors capul şi l-am văzut ridicându-se de pe bancă şi furişându-se afară, fără zgomot. Ascultase până când a auzit-o pe Catherine spunând că o căsătorie cu el ar degrada-o; dar după aceea n-a mai stat să asculte. Catherine, care sta pe jos, din pricina spetezei scaunului meu nu i-a putut observa nici prezența şi nici plecarea. Dar eu am tresărit şi i-am făcut semn să tacă.

—Pentru ce? mă întrebă, privind nervoasă în jur.

—Din pricina lui Joseph, răspunsei, auzind, din fericire, roțile căruței lui venind pe drum; şi trebuie să vină şi Heathcliff cu el. Nu sunt sigură dacă nu cumva a fost la uşă în clipa asta.

—Oh, nu cred că m-a putut auzi prin uşă, zise ea. Dă-mi-l pe Hareton până pregăteşti masa şi, când vei fi gata, cheamă-mă să cinez cu voi. Nu sunt cu conştiința împăcată, simt nevoia să mă potolesc şi să mă conving că Heathcliff nu ştie nimic din ce-am vorbit noi. Nu-i aşa că n-a auzit? Nu-i aşa că el nu ştie ce înseamnă să fii îndrăgostit?

—Nu văd de ce n-ar şti şi el ca şi dumneata, răspunsei; şi dacă

deserted in the world? Because, Miss Catherine—

'He quite deserted! We separated!' Catherine exclaimed with an accent of indignation. 'Who is to separate us, pray? They'll meet the fate of Milo! Not as long as I live, Ellen, for no mortal creature. Every Linton of the face of the earth might melt into nothing, before I could consent to forsake Heathcliff. Oh, that's not what I intend—that's not what I meant! I shouldn't be Mrs Linton, were such a price demanded! He'll be as much to me as he has been all his lifetime. Edgar must shake off his antipathy, and tolerate him, at least. He will, when he learns my true feelings towards him. Nelly, I see now, you think me a selfish wretch; but did it never strike you that if Heathcliff and I married, we would be beggars? Whereas if I marry Linton, I can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of my brother's power. […] My greatest miseries in the world have been Heathcliff's miseries, and I watched and felt each from the beginning; my great thought in living is himself. If all else perished, and he remained, I should still continue to be; and all else remained, and he were annihilated, the universe would turn to a mighty stranger; I should not seem a part of it. My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: the time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath—a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly I *am* Heathcliff! He's always, always in my

dumneata eşti aleasa inimii lui, va fi cea mai nefericită făptură care s-a născut vreodată! În ziua în care vei deveni doamna Linton, el îşi va pierde prietena, iubirea şi tot ce are pe lume! Te-ai gândit cum ai să suporți despărțirea de el şi cum va putea îndura el să fie cu desăvârşire singur pe lume? Pentru că, domnişoară Catherine...

—El cu desăvârşire singur pe lume! Noi despărțiți! exclamă ea cu un accent de indignare. Cine poate să ne despartă, rogu-te? Acela va avea soarta lui Milon! Nu, Ellen, cât timp voi trăi, nici o făptură muritoare nu mă va despărți de el. Poate să se aleagă praful de toți Lintonii de pe lume, căci eu tot nu voi consimți să-l părăsesc pe Heathcliff! A, nu, n-am de gând să fac una ca asta... nici prin gând nu-mi trece! Dacă ăsta-i prețul, nu voi accepta să devin doamna Linton! Heathcliff va însemna pentru mine întotdeauna tot atât de mult cât şi până acum! Edgar trebuie să se dezbare de antipatia lui, tolerându-l. Şi aşa va şi face după ce va afla adevăratele mele sentimente pentru el. Nelly, îmi dau seama că mă socoteşti o ticăloasă egoistă. Dar nu te-ai gândit niciodată că dacă Heathcliff şi cu mine ne-am căsători am fi nişte cerşetori? Pe când dacă mă mărit cu Linton, îl pot ajuta şi pe Heathcliff să se ridice şi voi putea să-l scot de sub puterea fratelui meu.

—Cu banii bărbatului dumitale, domnişoară Catherine? o întrebai. Să nu crezi că el va fi atât de îngăduitor cum îți închipui

mind—not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being. So, don't talk of our separation again.'

(in *Wuthering Heights* 71-3)

şi, cu toate că nu sunt un bun judecător, cred că ăsta-i cel mai slab motiv pe care l-ai găsit pentru a deveni soția tânărului Linton.

—N-ai dreptate, îmi răspunse, e cel mai tare motiv! Celelalte toate satisfac doar capriciile mele şi ale lui Edgar. Dar acest motiv va folosi unuia care cuprinde în ființa sa şi sentimentele mele pentru Edgar şi pentru mine însămi. Eu nu-ți pot tălmăci asta în vorbe. În acestă lume, marile mele suferințe au fost suferințele lui Heathcliff: le-am văzut şi simțit pe toate de la început. Unicul meu gând al vieții mele este el. Dacă totul ar pieri şi n-ar rămâne decât el, eu aş continua să exist; iar dacă totul ar rămâne şi el ar fi nimicit, universul s-ar transforma într-o uriaşă lume străină mie şi mi s-ar părea că nu mai fac parte dintr-însa. Iubirea mea pentru Linton seamănă cu frunzele pădurii, timpul o va schimba, îmi dau bine seama, aşa cum iarna schimbă pomii. Iubirea mea pentru Heathcliff însă e asemeni stâncilor eterne de sub pământ: nu prilej de încântare, ci necesitate. Nelly, eu sunt Heathcliff! El e mereu, mereu în mintea mea, nu ca o plăcere, aşa cum nici eu nu sunt întotdeauna o plăcere pentru mine însămi, ci ca propria mea ființă. Aşa că nu mai vorbi despre despărțirea noastră; e cu neputință, şi...

[Traducere de Yvonne Stahl, Editura pentru literatură, București, 1962]

How Can I Bear It?

The fragment below—narrated again by Nelly Dean—is the scene of direct confrontation between the two former lovers, Catherine and Heathcliff after her marriage with Linton. It is one of the most violent scenes in the Victorian novel, a scene of devastation and passionate reproaches. It contains all the cruel reality of Catherine and Heathcliff's ardour. Now Heathcliff realizes that life without Catherine cannot be conceivable. They both realize that they have destroyed their lives with their own reckless behaviour. The only thing that they still have are the ashes of their burnt and tortured souls. And passionate and pitiless reproaches on both sides, and the agonizing awareness that this is a point of no return when nothing can be saved from what was before. Catherine thought she could rule both Linton and Heathcliff but she was utterly wrong and, subjugated by Heathcliff's power of love, she is ready to pay for everything. Heathcliff offers her the brutal facts of reality, of what she did. Heathcliff's words hurt and open old wounds, and torture and kill. He cannot forgive her for what she did to herself and himself. Unlike the scene between Jane Eyre and Mr Rochester, here Reason has totally vanished away and Supreme Passion and Destruction have become absolute masters.

[…] 'Oh Cathy! Oh, my life! how can I bear it?' was the first sentence Heathcliff uttered, in a tone that did not seek to disguise his despair.

And now he stared at her so earnestly that I thought the very intensity of his gaze would bring tears into his eyes; but they burned with anguish, they did not melt.

'What now?' said Catherine, leaning back, and returning his look with a suddenly clouded brow—her humour was a mere

—Oh, Cathy! Viața mea! Cum am să pot îndura asta? fură primele lui cuvinte, pe care le rosti pe un ton ce nu căuta să-i ascundă deznădejdea.

Apoi o privi cu-atâta intensitate, încât eram sigură că ochii i se vor umple de lacrimi; dar ardeau de spaimă şi nu se umeziseră.

—Şi-acum? zise Catherine; apoi, rezemându-se de speteaza scaunului, răspunse privirii lui printr-o bruscă încruntare. Aşa

*vane for constantly varying caprices. 'You and Edgar have broken my heart, Heathcliff! And you both come to bewail the deed to me, as if you were the people to be pitied! I shall not pity you, not I. You have killed me—and thriven on it, I think. How strong you are! How many years do you mean to live after I am gone?'

Heathcliff had knelt on one knee to embrace her; he attempted to rise, but she seized his hair, and kept him down.

'I wish I could hold you,' she continued, bitterly, 'till we were both dead! I shouldn't care what you suffered. I care nothing for your sufferings. Why shouldn't you suffer? I do! Will you forget me? Will you be happy when I am in the earth? Will you say twenty years hence, 'That's the grave of Catherine Earnshaw. I loved her long ago, and was wretched to lose her; but it is past. I've loved many others since; my children are dearer to me than she was, and, at death, I shall not rejoice that I am going to see her, I shall be sorry that I must leave them!' Will you say so, Heathcliff?'

'Don't torture me till I am mad as yourself,' cried he, *wrenching his head free, and grinding his teeth. […] 'Are you possessed with a devil,' he pursued, savagely, 'to talk in that manner to me when you are dying? Do you *reflect that all those words will be branded in my memory, and eating deeper eternally after you have left me? You know you lie to say I have

era starea ei, schimbătoare tot timpul. Tu şi cu Edgar mi-aţi zdrobit inima, Heathcliff! Şi-apoi aţi venit la mine să vă plângeţi, de parcă voi aţi fi de plâns! Dar mie nu mi-e milă de voi. Voi m-aţi ucis... şi văd că v-a priit, aşa cred eu. Cât eşti de puternic! Câţi ani mai ai de gând să trăieşti după moartea mea?

Heathcliff îngenunchease s-o sărute, iar acum încerca să se ridice; dar ea îl prinsese de păr şi-l ţinea îngenuncheat.

—Aş vrea să te ţin aici, continuă ea pe un ton amarnic, până vom muri amândoi. Nu-mi pasă de ce-ai suferit! Nu-mi pasă de suferinţele tale! De ce să nu suferi şi tu? Eu nu sufăr? Ai să mă uiţi? Şi-ai să te simţi fericit când eu voi fi în pământ? Iar peste douăzeci de ani ai să spui: „Iată mormântul bietei Catherine Earnshaw. Am iubit-o, e mult de-atunci, şi-am fost nenorocit când am pierdut-o, dar acum mi-a trecut. De-atunci am iubit multe alte femei; copiii mei mi-s mai dragi decât mi-era ea, iar când voi muri n-am să mă bucur că mă duc la ea. O să fiu trist că trebuie să mă despart de ei!" Aşa ai să spui, Heathcliff?

—Nu mă chinui atâta, căci am s-ajung şi eu nebun ca tine! strigă el, smucindu-şi capul din strânsoarea mâinilor ei şi scrâşnind din dinţi.

Pentru un spectator rece, Heathcliff şi Catherine alcătuiau un tablou straniu şi înspăimântător. Catherine avea dreptate să creadă că cerul va însemna un exil pentru ea, dacă, o dată cu trupul nu-şi va lepăda şi caracterul. În momentul acela

killed you, and Catherine, you know that I could as soon forget you as my existence! Is it not sufficient for your infernal selfishness, that while you are at peace I shall *writhe in the torments of hell?'

'I shall not be at peace,' moaned Catherine, recalled to a sense of physical weakness by the violent, unequal throbbing of her heart, which beat visibly and audibly under this excess of agitation.

She said nothing further till the paroxysm was over; then she continued, more kindly—

'I'm not wishing you greater torment than I have, Heathcliff. I only wish us never to be parted: and should a word of mine distress you hereafter, think I feel the same distress underground, and for my own sake, forgive me! Come here and kneel down again! You never harmed me in your life. Nay, if you nurse anger, that will be worse to remember than my harsh words! Won't you come here again? Do!'

Heathcliff went to the back of her chair and leant over, but not so far as to let her see his face, which was livid with emotion. She bent round to look at him; he would not permit it; turning abruptly, he walked to the fireplace, where he stood, silent, with his back to wards her.

Mrs. Linton's glance followed him suspiciously: every moment woke a new sentiment in her. After a pause, and a

Catherine, cu fața albă, cu buzele palide şi ochii scânteietori, ținând între degete câteva bucle smulse din cele pe care le avusese în mână, avea o expresie sălbatică şi răzbunătoare. Heathcliff se ridicase, sprijinindu-se c-o mână, iar cu cealaltă o prinsese de braț; dar mângâierile lui erau atât de nepotrivite cu starea în care se afla Catherine, încât atunci când i-a dat drumul, pe pielea brațului ei se puteau vedea patru urme albastre.

—Eşti posedată de diavol, continuă el sălbatic, de-mi vorbeşti astfel chiar şi-n pragul morții? Te-ai gândit tu că toate vorbele astea mi se vor întipări în minte ca nişte peceți puse cu fierul roşu şi că mă vor arde în fiecare zi tot mai tare după ce tu nu vei mai fi? Ştii prea bine că minți când îmi spui că eu te-am ucis. Şi, Catherine, ştii că nu te pot uita aşa cum nu pot uita că trăiesc! Egoismului tău infernal nu-i ajunge gândul că, în timp ce tu-ți vei găsi liniştea, eu o să mă zvârcolesc în chinurile iadului.

—Eu n-am să-mi găsesc liniştea, gemu Catherine cuprinsă de o mare slăbiciune, provocată de zvâcnirile violente şi sacadate ale inimii, care se vedeau şi se auzeau în această agitație excesivă.

Cât timp ținu starea aceasta de paroxism ea a tăcut, dar după aceea a continuat pe un ton mai blând:

—Nu-ți doresc chinuri mai mari decât ale mele, Heathcliff. Nu doresc decât să nu ne despărțim niciodată, iar dacă un

prolonged gaze, she resumed addressing me in accents of indignant disappointment—

'Oh, you see, Nelly, he would not *relent a moment to keep me out of the grave. *That* is how I'm loved! Well, never mind. That is not *my* Heathcliff. I shall love mine yet; and take him with me—he's in my soul. And,' added she *musingly, 'the thing that *irks me most is this shattered prison, after all. I'm tired, tired of being enclosed here. I'm wearying to escape into that glorious world and to be always there: not seeing it dimly through tears, and yearning for it through the walls of an aching heart, but really with it, and in it. Nelly, you think you are better and more fortunate than I, in full health and strength; you are sorry for me—very soon they will be altered. I shall be sorry for *you*. I shall be incomparably beyond and above you all. I *wonder* he won't be near me!' She bent on to herself. 'I thought he wished it. Heathcliff, dear! you should not be *sullen now. Do come to me, Heathcliff.'

In her eagerness she rose and supported herself on the arm of the chair. At that earnest appeal he turned to her, looking absolutely desperate. His eyes wide, and wet at last, flashed fiercely on her; his breast heaved convulsively. An instant they held *asunder, and then how they met I hardly saw, but Catherine made a spring, and he caught her, and they were locked in an embrace from which I thought my mistress would

cuvânt rostit de mine cândva te va durea, gândeşte-te că eu, sub pământ, simt aceaşi durere şi, de dragul meu, iartă-mă. Vino aici şi îngenunche lângă mine încă o dată! Tu nu mi-ai făcut nici un rău în viața ta. Nu, şi dacă nutreşti vreun sentiment de mânie, va fi pentru tine o amintire mult mai urâtă decât cuvintele mele aspre! Nu vrei să mai vii o dată aici? Vino!

Heathcliff se apropie de speteaza scaunului şi se apleacă asupra doamnei Linton, dar nu îndeajuns de mult ca ea să-i poată vedea fața, lividă de emoție. Se întoarse pentru a-l privi, dar Heathcliff nu voia să fie văzut, aşa c-o părăsi brusc şi se îndreptă spre cămin; acolo se opri tăcut, cu spatele spre noi. Privirea doamnei Linton îl urmări, bănuitoare. Fiecare mişcare de a lui trezea în ea un sentiment nou. După o pauză şi o privire prelungă, Catherine reîncepu, adresându-mi-se de astă dată mie, cu un accent de indignare şi deznădejde.

—Oh, Nelly, nu se înduioşează nici o clipă ca să mă scape de la moarte. Vezi, aşa sunt iubită eu! Bine, nu face nimic. Acela nu-i Heathcliff al meu. Eu am să-l iubesc însă şi de-acum înainte pe-al meu şi am să-l iau cu mine; e în sufletul meu. De altfel, adăugă ea visătoare, lucrul care mă supără cel mai mult e temnița asta. M-am săturat de când sunt închisă aici. Mi-e dor să ajung în lumea aceea minunată şi să rămân acolo pentru totdeauna: să n-o văd tulbure, cu ochii aceştia înlăcrimați, şi să n-o doresc cu puterea unei inimi care mă doare, ci să fiu

never be released alive—in fact, to my eyes, she seemed directly insensible. He flung himself into the nearest seat, and on my approaching hurriedly to ascertain if she had fainted, he *gnashed at me, and foamed like a mad dog, and gathered her to him with greedy jealousy. I did not feel as if I were in the company of a creature of my own species; it appeared that he would not understand though I spoke to him; so I stood off and held my tongue, in great perplexity.

A movement of Catherine's relieved me a little presently—she put up her hand to clasp his neck, and bring her cheek to his as he held her; while he, in return, covered her with frantic caresses, said wildly—

'You *teach me how cruel you've been—cruel and false. *Why* did you despise me? *Why* did you betray your own heart, Cathy? I have not one word of comfort. You deserve this. You have killed yourself. Yes, you may kiss me, and cry, and *wring out my kisses and tears; they'll blight you—they'll damn you. You loved me—then what *right* had you to leave me? What right—answer me—for the poor fancy you felt for Linton? Because misery, and degradation, and death, and nothing that God or Satan could inflict would have parted us, *you* of your own will did it. I have not broken your heart—*you* have broken it; and in breaking it, you have broken mine. So much the worse for me, that I am strong. Do I want to leave? What kind of living will it

într-adevăr cu ea şi în ea. Nelly, tu te crezi mai mulţumită şi mai norocoasă decât mine pentru că eşti în plină sănătate şi putere; acum mă plângi tu pe mine... dar foarte curând nu va mai fi aşa. Vine vremea când am să te plâng eu pe tine. Atunci eu am să fiu incomparabil mai departe şi mai presus de voi toţi. Mă mir că el nu vrea să stea lângă mine! Apoi continuă, vorbind ca pentru sine: Credeam că doreşte şi el asta. Heathcliff, scumpule, n-ar trebui să fii supărat acum! Vino lângă mine, Heathcliff!

În agitaţia ei se ridică şi se sprijini de braţul fotoliului. La această chemare gravă Heatcliff se întoarse spre Catherine; pe chip i se citea o adâncă deznădejde. Ochii lui, larg deschişi şi umezi, o priviră fulgerător şi sălbatic; pieptul i se mişca în respiraţii convulsive. O clipă rămaseră separaţi... apoi, n-aş putea spune cum s-au întâlnit... Catherine făcu un salt, iar el o prinse, şi se uniră într-o îmbrăţişare din care credeam că stăpâna mea nu va mai ieşi vie. De fapt, aşa cum o vedeam eu, părea că nu mai are viaţă. El se azvârli în cel mai apropiat fotoliu şi, când mă îndreptai în grabă să văd dacă nu leşinase, mă privi scrâşnind din dinţi; avea spume la gură ca un câine turbat şi-o strângea la piept cu o aprigă însetare. Mi se părea că nu mă mai aflu în preajma unei făpturi din aceaşi specie cu mine. Parcă nu înţelegea nimic, cu toate că-i vorbeam. Atunci m-am dat la o parte şi n-am mai rostit nici un cuvânt, uluită peste măsură.

În cele din urmă Catherine făcu o mişcare, şi eu mă simţii

be when you—oh, God! would you like to live with your soul in the grave?' […]

(in *Wuthering Heights* 139-42).

uşurată: îşi ridică mâna şi-i puse braţul în jurul gâtului, lipindu-şi obrazul de obrazul lui; iar Heathcliff, copleşind-o cu mângâieri frenetice, zise cu sălbăticie:

—Acum abia îmi arăţi cât ai fost de crudă... crudă şi falsă. De ce m-ai dispreţuit? De ce ţi-ai trădat propria-ţi inimă, Cathy? Nu găsesc nici un cuvânt de mângâiere. Meriţi să suferi. Tu te-ai ucis singură. Da, poţi să mă săruţi şi să plângi, poţi să-mi storci sărutări şi lacrimi: ele te vor arde... te vor condamna. M-ai iubit... atunci cu ce drept m-ai părăsit? Cu ce drept... răspunde-mi... m-ai părăsit pentru un biet capriciu pe care l-ai simţit faţă de Linton? Căci nici suferinţa, nici degradarea, nici moartea, nici Dumnezeu şi nici Satana nu ne-ar fi putut despărţi! *Tu*, de bunăvoie, ai făcut-o: Nu eu ţi-am zdrobit inima... tu ţi-ai zdrobit-o, şi, zdrobind-o pe-a ta, ai zdrobit-o şi pe-a mea. Pentru mine e şi mai greu, pentru că sunt sănătos. Crezi că vreau să trăiesc? Ce fel de viaţă voi duce dacă tu... Doamne! *Ţie* ţi-ar plăcea să trăieşti când sufletul ţi-e în mormânt?

[Traducere de Yvonne Stahl, Editura pentru literatură, Bucureşti, 1962]

Sleepers in that Quiet Earth

The extract inserted below – part of the discussion that Mr Lockwood has with Mrs Dean after his return to the Heights – is in strong contrast with the previous. It is the last scene of the novel when the terrible turbulence caused by Catherine's marriage to Edgar Linton and Heathcliff's subsequent settling of scores is over and when the tempest of passion and revenge has abated and silence has almost unexpectedly settled down. But this silence, material and not spiritual, is rather questionable – it is the silence of after-life, of what lies beyond the grave.

The extract is the closing scene of the novel when Heathcliff has been buried in the local cemetery next to the tombs of Catherine and Edgar Linton. The last paragraphs of the book have been seen by many as pointing to a possible atonement foreshadowing a world of universal tranquillity. But, as Mengham sees it (102), it might all point to wishful thinking, something that Mr Lockwood would like to believe, 'his anxiety not to think otherwise.'

We buried him [Heathcliff], to the scandal of the whole neighbourhood, as he wished. Earnshaw and I, the *sexton, and six men to carry the coffin, comprehended the whole attendance. The six men departed when they had let it down into the grave: we stayed to see it covered. Hareton, with a streaming face, dug green *sods, and laid them over the brown mould himself: at present it is as smooth and verdant as its companion mounds – and I hope its tenant sleeps as soundly. But the country folks, if you ask them, would swear on the Bible that he *walks*: there are those who speak to having met him near the church, and on the moor, and even within this house. Idle tales, you'll say, and so

L-am înmormântat, spre indignarea întregii vecinătăți, întocmai cum a dorit. Earnshaw şi cu mine, groparul şi şase oameni care au dus sicriul au format întregul cortegiu. Cei şase oameni au plecat după ce l-au coborât în groapă, noi am rămas până l-am văzut acoperit. Hareton, cu fața scăldată în lacrimi, a tăiat cu sapa bucăți de pământ cu iarbă şi le-a aşezat cu mâna lui peste movila cafenie. Acum e tot atât de nedetă şi verde ca şi mormintele vecine... şi sper că şi fostul meu stăpân doarme tot atât de adânc ca şi cei de lângă el. Dar oamenii din partea locului, dacă-i întrebați, jură pe *Biblie* că el umblă; şi sunt unii care spun că l-ar fi întâlnit lângă biserică, alții că l-au văzut pe dealuri şi

say I. Yet that old man by the kitchen fire affirms he has seen two on 'em looking out of his chamber window on every rainy night since his death:—and an odd thing happened to me about a month ago. I was going to the Grange one evening—a dark evening, threatening thunder—and, just at the turn of the Heights, I encountered a little boy with a sheep and two lambs before him; he was crying terribly; and I supposed the lambs were skittish, and would not be guided.

'What is the matter, my little man?' I asked.

'There's Heathcliff and a woman *yonder, under t' nab,' he blubbered, 'un' I *darnut pass 'em.'

I saw nothing; but neither the sheep nor he would go on so I bid him take the road lower down. He probably raised the phantoms from thinking, as he traversed the moors alone, on the nonsense he had heard his parents and companions repeat. Yet, still, I don't like being out in the dark now; and I don't like being left by myself in this grim house: I cannot help it; I shall be glad when they leave it, and shift to the Grange.

'They are going to the Grange, then?' I said.

'Yes,' answered Mrs. Dean, 'as soon as they are married, and that will be on New Year's Day.'

'And who will live here then?'

'Why, Joseph will take care of the house, and, perhaps, a lad to keep him company. They will live in the kitchen, and the rest

chiar aici, în casă. Poveşti deşarte, o să ziceți dumneavoastră, şi-aşa zic şi eu. Totuşi, bătrânul acela de lângă focul din bucătărie susține că, privind pe fereastra odăii lui, a văzut — de la moartea lui Heathcliff încoace — în fiecare noapte ploioasă două ființe... Iar mie mi s-a-ntâmplat ceva ciudat, cam acum o lună. Într-o seară mă duceam la Grange... era o seară învolburată, prevestitoare de furtună... şi tocmai la cotitura drumului spre Heights m-am întâlnit cu un băiețel care mâna o oaie şi doi miei. Băiatul plângea îngrozitor, iar eu mi-am închipuit că oile erau îndărătnice şi nu se lăsau mânate.

—Ce s-a-ntâmplat, băiete? l-am întrebat.

—Acolo sub deal e Heathcliff cu o femeie, zise el plângând cu lacrimi ce-i curgeau şiroaie, şi nu cutez să trec pe lângă ei.

Eu n-am văzut nimic, dar nici oile şi nici el nu voiau să înainteze. I-am spus s-o ia pe drumul din vale. Probabil că şi-a creat singur fantomele, în timp ce străbătea dealurile, gândindu-se la poveştile pe care le auzise repetate de părinții şi prietenii lui. Însă nici mie nu-mi mai place acum să fiu pe afară când se întunecă şi nici nu-mi mai place să rămân singură în casa asta sumbră. Nu pot scăpa de-aceste gânduri şi-aş fi fericită dacă ei ar părăsi-o şi s-ar muta la Grange.

—Aşadar, or să se ducă la Grange, am spus eu.

—Da, răspunse doamna Dean; de îndată ce se vor căsători, şi asta va fi în ziua de Anul Nou.

will be shut up.'

'For the use of such ghosts as choose to inhabit it?' I observed.

'No, Mr. Lockwood,' said Nelly, shaking her head. 'I believe the dead are at peace: but it is not right to speak of them with levity.'

At that moment the garden gate swung to; the ramblers were returning.

'*They* are afraid of nothing,' I grumbled, watching their approach through the window. 'Together, they would brave Satan and all his legions.'

As they stepped on to the door-stones, and halted to take a last look at the moon—or, more correctly, at each other by her light—I felt irresistibly impelled to escape them again; and, pressing a remembrance into the hand of Mrs. Dean, and disregarding her expostulations at my rudeness, I vanished through the kitchen as they opened the house-door; and so should have confirmed Joseph in his opinion of his fellow-servant's gay indiscretions, had he not fortunately recognised me for a respectable character by the sweet ring of a sovereign at his feet.

My walk home was lengthened by a diversion in the direction of the *kirk. When beneath its walls, I perceived decay had made progress, even in seven months: many a window showed black gaps deprived of glass; and slates jutted off here

—Şi-atunci cine-o să rămână aici?

—Păi, cine? Joseph o să aibă grijă de casă şi, poate, pe lângă el, vreun băiat care să-i țină de urât. Vor locui în bucătărie, iar restul va fi închis.

—Casa va fi la dispoziția stafiilor care vor dori s-o bântuie, am spus eu.

—Nu, domnule Lockwood, zise Nelly dând din cap. Eu cred că morții odihnesc în pace şi nu-i bine să vorbeşti despre ei în glumă.

În acel moment poarta grădinii se deschise; hoinarii se întorseseră.

—Ăstora nu le e frică de nimic, am mârâit eu, urmărindu-i pe fereastră cum se apropiau. Împreună l-ar înfrunta şi pe Satana cu toate oştile lui!

Când au păşit pe pietrele din fața uşii şi s-au oprit să arunce o ultimă privire lunii — sau mai bine zis să se privească unul pe altul în lumina ei — am simțit un imbold irezistibil să fug iarăşi din calea lor; şi, punând în mâna doamnei Dean o mică amintire, fără a ține seamă de protestele ei, când tinerii au deschis uşa spre sală, eu am dispărut prin bucătărie. Aş fi confirmat, desigur, părerea lui Joseph despre purtările deşănțate ale doamne Dean dacă, din fericire, nu şi-ar fi dat seama că, datorită clinchetului ademenitor al unui ban de aur pe care l-am lăsat să cadă la picioarele lui, sunt un om respectabil.

and there, beyond the right line of the roof, to be gradually worked off in coming autumn storms.

I sought, and soon discovered, the three headstones on the slope next the moor: on middle one grey, and half buried in the heath; Edgar Linton's only harmonized by the turf and moss creeping up its foot; Heathcliff's still bare.

I lingered round them, under that benign sky: watched the moths fluttering among the heath and harebells, listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass, and wondered how any one could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth.

(in *Wuthering Heights* 299-300)

În drumul meu spre casă m-am abătut pe la capela bisericii. Apropiindu-mă de ziduri am observat că paragina se întinsese mai mult şi că totul era mai năruit decât acum şapte luni. Multe ferestre erau doar găuri negre, fără geam; iar din loc în loc, dincolo de linia dreaptă a acoperişului, ieşeau câteva țigle, care vor fi smulse, cu încetul, de furtunile din toamna ce va să vină.

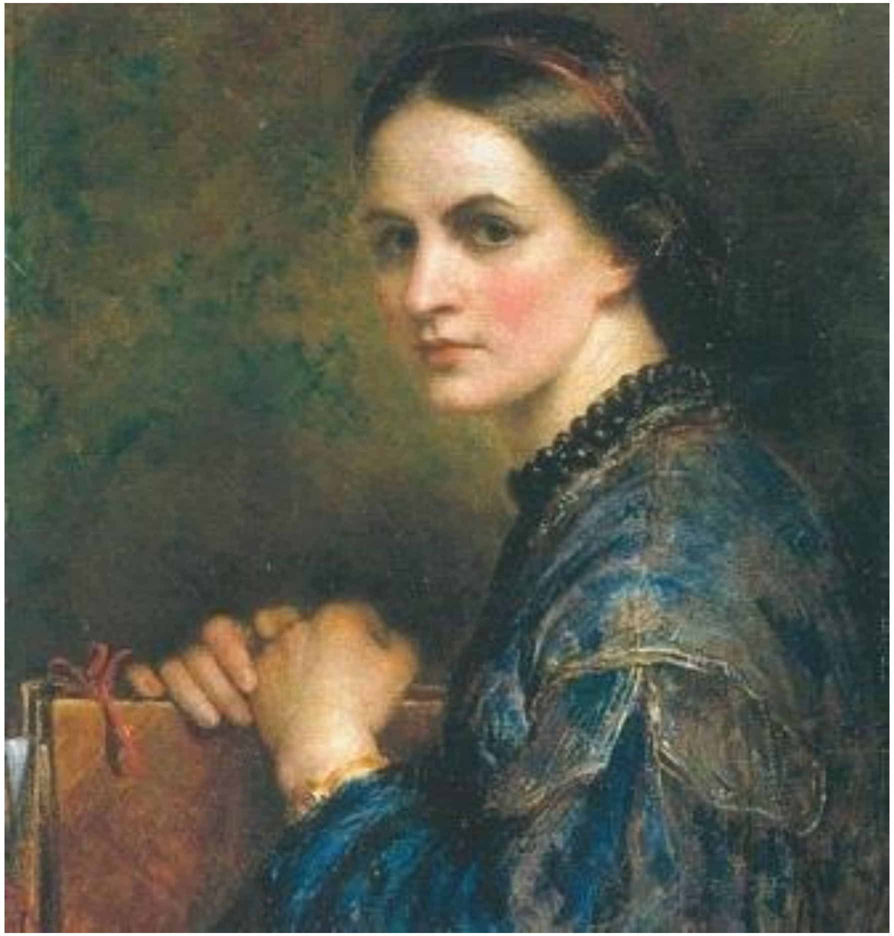
Am căutat şi-am descoperit uşor cele trei pietre funerare pe povârnişul de lângă mlaştină. Cea din mijloc era cenuşie şi pe jumătate năpădită de buruieni, a lui Edgar Linton acoperită de iarbă şi muşchi, iar a lui Heathcliff, încă goală.

Am zăbovit printre ele, sub cerul acela binevoitor, dulce, senin; am urmărit fluturii ce zburau printre ierburi şi clopoței, am ascultat vântul suav ce adia prin iarbă, şi m-am întrebat: Cum a putut crede cineva vreodată că cei ce odihnesc în pacea pământului ar putea avea un somn tulburat?!

[Traducere de Yvonne Stahl, Editura pentru literatură, Bucureşti, 1962]

Anne Brontë

(1820-1849)



Anne Brontë (1820-1849) was the youngest of six children of Patrick and Marie Brontë. She was taught in the family's Haworth home, chiefly by her sister, Charlotte. She took a position as governess briefly in 1839 and then again for four years, between 1841-1845, at Thorpe Green in Yorkshire. There her irresponsible brother, Patrick Branwell, a drunkard and opium addict, joined her in 1845, intending to serve as a tutor. Anne returned home soon after but was followed shortly by her brother, who had been dismissed, charged with making love to his employer's wife.

In 1846 Anne contributed 21 poems to *Poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell*, a joint work with her sisters Charlotte and Emily. Her first novel, *Agnes Grey*, was published together with Emily's *Wuthering Heights* in December 1847.

The reception to these volumes, associated in the public mind with the immense popularity of Charlotte's *Jane Eyre* (October 1847), led to quick publication of Anne's second novel, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, published in three volumes in June 1848.

Anne Brontë fell ill with tuberculosis toward the end of the year 1848 and died the following May.

Anne Brontë wrote in the literary shadow of her two sisters being 'less vehement' (Sampson 640) than them; as such, she was often considered undeservedly less brilliant than Charlotte and Emily. She is more appreciated now than during her lifetime and there are not few voices that place her in line with Jane Austen. Her novels are characterised by naturalness and outspokenness both in the way she devised her plots and conceived her characters. In spite of apparently complicated plots with a lot of characters involved, Anne Brontë managed to offer credible solutions to the points of conflict and preserve the reader's interest in the plot.

From *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*

Anne Brontë confessed in the Preface to the second edition of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* that by writing this novel she intended to tell the truth 'for truth always conveys its own moral to those who are able to receive it.' (in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* 3). Her story is indeed moral in its didactic purpose and, at the same time, meant to prove Anne's belief that in spite of all adversities, no soul shall be ultimately lost and the main heroes will be able to find a gateway to their happiness.

Essentially the novel tells the story of a shattered marriage. The husband is Arthur Huntington whose debauchery and degradation bring about his ruin and death. The wife is Helen Graham (Huntington), the tenant of Wildfell Hall, said to be a widow and believed to have behaved in an immoral way. But she turns out to be not only the victim of her drunken husband's ill-treatment and shameless conduct but also a dedicated wife nursing him to the last moments of his life.

In an age when the ideal image of the married woman was that of submissive wife, when a woman did not have very much of other choice than do her duty to her husband (Nunokawa 129), Anne's novel demolished this belief by showing that a woman is capable to forbid her squandering husband access to her bedroom and that she is able to earn an independent living for herself and her child (Smith xvi). Hence the hostile reviews that Anne received after the publication of this novel.

The structure of *The Tenant* presents an interesting symbiosis of two elements taken from her two sisters' more famous novels (Horsman 178): the Rochester plot—with the mystery of a love affair and an offer of marriage to a person who is already married—and the presence of a wicked Heathcliff-like character—Arthur Huntington, a vicious character whose disappearance, just like Heathcliff's, will offer the only solution to the plot. The prototype for Arthur Huntington is most likely Anne's brother, Patrick Branwell.

Anne Brontë's narrative technique offers another interesting symbiosis—that of two first person narratives with two subsequent perspectives: Gilbert Markham's and Helen Graham's. Markham's story emerges from a series of letters or rather narrative instalments that he offers his friend, Jack Halford; his narrative frames the account contained in Helen's journal whose

pages form the central part of the novel.

Wildfell Hall

The text below contains the description of Wildfell Hall, as seen by Gilbert Markham — isolated, mysterious, abandoned and almost in ruins, placed in a landscape of 'savage wilderness', with gardens overgrown with weeds, anticipating, as in Wuthering Heights, the tempestuous human relation hidden in Helen Graham's soul.

Near the top of this hill, about two miles from Linden-Car, stood Wildfell Hall, a *superannuated mansion of the Elizabethan era, built of dark grey stone, venerable and picturesque to look at, but doubtless, cold and gloomy enough to inhabit, with its thick stone *mullions and little latticed *panes, its time-eaten air-holes, and its too lonely, too unsheltered situation,—only shielded from the war of wind and weather by a group of Scotch firs, themselves half *blighted with storms, and looking as stern and gloomy as the Hall itself. Behind it lay a few desolate fields, and then the brown heath-clad summit of the hill; before it (enclosed by stone walls, and entered by an iron gate, with large balls of grey granite—similar to those which decorated the roof and *gables—surmounting the gate-posts) was a garden,—once stocked with such hard plants and flowers as could best *brook the soil and climate, and such trees and shrubs as could best endure the gardener's torturing

Necunoscuta de la Wildfell Hall

Aproape de vârful acestui deal, cam la vreo două mile de Linden-Car, se înălța Wildfell Hall, un conac demodat din epoca elisabetană. Era construit din piatră cenușie, întunecată și avea o înfățișare venerabilă și pitorească, dacă era vorba numai să-l privești; însă fără doar și poate trebuie să fi fost destul de rece și sumbru ca locuință, cu ferestruicile zăbrelite săpate în zidurile groase de piatră, cu răsuflătorile mâncate de vreme și cu așezarea lui mult prea însingurată și neadăpostită. Era ocrotit de vitregia vânturilor și ploilor doar de un pâlc de brazi scoțieni, și aceștia ciuntiți pe jumătate de vijelii și arătând la fel de sumbri și de severi ca și conacul în sine. Îndărătul acestuia se întindeau câteva ogoare părăsite, apoi se înălța vârful colinei îmbrăcat în ierburi sălbatice de culori întunecate. În fața lui se afla o grădină (înconjurată de ziduri de piatră și cu intrarea printr-o poartă de fier cu stâlpi de granit cenușiu deasupra cărora se înălțau niște globuri masive din același material—asemănătoare celor ce

*shears, and most readily assume the shapes he chose to give them,—now, having been left so many years *untilled and untrimmed, abandoned to the weeds and the grass, to the frost and the wind, the rain and the drought, it presented a very singular appearance indeed. The close green walls of *privet, that had bordered the principal walk, were two-thirds withered away, and the rest grown beyond all reasonable bounds; the old *boxwood swan, that sat beside the *scraper, had lost its neck and half its body: the castellated towers of laurel in the middle of the garden, the gigantic warrior that stood on one side of the gateway, and the lion that guarded the other, were *sprouted into such fantastic shapes as resembled nothing either in heaven or earth, or in the waters under the earth; but, to my young imagination, they presented all of them a *goblinish appearance, that harmonised well with the ghostly legions and dark traditions our old nurse had told us respecting the haunted hall and its departed occupants.

(in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* 19-20)

împodobeau acoperișul și frontoanele casei). Odinioară grădina fusese împodobită cu plante și flori rezistente care puteau să îndure clima neprielnică și să crească pe un pământ atât de neprietenos, precum și cu copaci și arbuști care se arătau cât mai supuși foarfecelor chinuitoare ale grădinarului, căpătând formele pe care dorea el să le dea. Acum însă, fiind lăsată atâția ani în paragină, înțelenită și neîngrijită, pradă bălăriilor și ierburilor, gerurilor și vânturilor, ploii și secetei, grădina avea o înfățișare cu totul ieșită din comun. Perdelele verzi de lemn câinesc care se întindeau pe ambele laturi ale aleii principale se ofiliseră în cea mai mare parte, iar restul crescuseră de-a valma și cum dădea Dumnezeu. Vechea lebădă din lemn de soc așezată lângă răzuitoarea de la intrare își pierduse gâtul și jumătate din trup; tufele crenelate de laur din mijlocul grădinii, războinicul uriaș care străjuia o parte a intrării și leul care o păzea de cealaltă parte, ajunseseră la forme atât de fantastice încât nu mai semănau cu nici o ființă și cu nici un lucru de pe pământ, din cer sau din apele subpământene. Dar pentru imaginația mea tinerească ele căpătaseră cu toate chipuri necurate care se potriveau pe deplin cu oștile de strigoi și cu legendele întunecate spuse de bătrâna noastră doică despre această locuință bântuită de stafii și despre oamenii care stătuseră în ea și o părăsiseră.

[Traducere de Andrei Bantaș, Editura Eminescu, București, 1974]

How Can You Degrade Yourself So?

The longer passage below, a part of Helen Graham's diary, illustrates the tense and deteriorating relations between the two spouses, with Arthur Huntington debasing and destroying himself as a result of his drinking and his revelling escapades, his 'extravagances' in London. Now has just returned home from one of such escapades and is again in one of his moods. Huntington's treatment of his wife is quite similar to Heathcliff's ill-treatment of Isabella in Wuthering Heights.

On the following morning I received a few lines from him myself, confirming Hargrave's [the brother of Milicent Hargrave, Helen's friend] *intimations respecting his approaching return. And he did come next week, but in a condition of body and mind even worse than before. I did not, however, intend to pass over his *derelictions this time without a remark; I found it would not do. But the first day he was weary with his journey, and I was glad to get him back: I would not upbraid him then; I would wait till to-morrow. Next morning he was weary still: I would wait a little longer. But at dinner, when, after breakfasting at twelve o'clock on a bottle of soda-water and a cup of strong coffee, and lunching at two on another bottle of soda-water mingled with brandy, he was finding fault with everything on the table, and declaring we must change our cook, I thought the time was come.

În dimineața următoare am primit și eu câteva rânduri de la el, confirmând veștile transmise de Hargrave cu privire la apropiata lui întoarcere. Într-adevăr, a venit săptămâna următoare, dar într-o stare și mai proastă decât data trecută. Acum nu mai aveam deloc de gând să trec peste faptele lui—neglijența și părăsirea—fără o vorbă; mi s-a părut că nu se cade s-o fac. Însă în prima zi era obosit de drum și eu eram bucuroasă că-l am iarăși lângă mine: n-am vrut să-l ocărăsc chiar atunci. Aveam de gând să aștept până a doua zi. În dimineața următoare era încă obosit: așadar, aveam să mai adăst puțin. Dar la cină (după ce luase la ora douăsprezece micul dejun constând dintr-o sticlă de apă gazoasă și o ceașcă de cafea tare și după ce la ora două luase prânzul—altă sticlă de apă gazoasă amestecată cu rachiu—găsind cusururi la toate în timpul mesei și declarând că trebuie să ne schimbăm bucătăreasa), am socotit că a sosit

'It is the same cook as we had before you went, Arthur,' said I. 'You were generally pretty well satisfied with her then.'

'You must have been letting her get into *slovenly habits, then, while I was away. It is enough to poison one, eating such a disgusting mess!' And he pettishly pushed away his plate, and leant back despairingly in his chair.

'I think it is you that are changed, not she,' said I, but with the utmost gentleness, for I did not wish to irritate him.

'It may be so,' he replied carelessly, as he seized a tumbler of wine and water, adding, when he had tossed it off, 'for I have an infernal fire in my veins, that all the waters of the ocean cannot quench!'

'What kindled it?' I was about to ask, but at that moment the butler entered and began to take away the things.

'Be quick, Benson; do have done with that infernal clatter!' cried his master. 'And don't bring the cheese, unless you want to make me sick outright!'

Benson, in some surprise, removed the cheese, and did his best to effect a quiet and speedy clearance of the rest; but, unfortunately, there was a rumple in the carpet, caused by the hasty pushing back of his master's chair, at which he tripped and stumbled, causing a rather alarming concussion with the trayful of crockery in his hands, but no positive damage, save the fall and breaking of a sauce *tureen; but, to my unspeakable shame

timpul.

—Dar e aceeași bucătăreasă pe care am avut-o și înainte de plecarea ta, Arthur, i-am zis. Pe atunci erai în general destul de mulțumit de ea.

—Probabil că i-ai permis să se lase pe tânjală și să se deprindă tot mai neglijentă în timpul absenței mele. Porcăriile astea dezgustătoare sânt otravă curată!

Și cu un gest țâfnos a împins farfuria într-o parte și s-a lăsat cu un aer desperat pe speteaza scaunului.

—Mă tem ca tu te-ai schimbat, nu ea—i-am zis eu, dar cu maximum de blândețe, pentru că nu voiam să-l enervez.

—Se prea poate, mi-a răspuns el nepăsător luând un pahar de vin amestecat cu apă și adăugând, după ce l-a dat pe gât: Pentru că am în vine un foc infernal pe care nu-l pot stinge toate apele oceanului!

—Dar ce anume l-a aprins? tocmai mă pregăteam eu să-l întreb când, exact în clipa aceea intră majordomul și începu să strângă masa.

—Mișcă-te mai repede, Benson! Termină odată cu zăngănitul ăsta infernal! Strigă stăpânul lui. Și nu mai adu brânza dacă nu cumva vrei să-mi vină rău de tot!

Cam surprins, Benson luă platoul cu brânză de acolo și se strădui cât putu să strângă restul lucrurilor repede și fără zgomot. Dar din nefericire covorul avea un creț—pricinuit de

and dismay, Arthur turned furiously around upon him, and swore at him with savage coarseness. The poor man turned pale, and visibly trembled as he stooped to pick up the fragments.

'He couldn't help it, Arthur,' said I; 'the carpet caught his foot, and there's no great harm done. Never mind the pieces now, Benson; you can clear them away afterwards.'

Glad to be released, Benson expeditiously set out the dessert and withdrew.

'What could you mean, Helen, by taking the servant's part against me,' said Arthur, as soon as the door was closed, 'when you knew I was distracted?'

'I did not know you were distracted, Arthur: and the poor man was quite frightened and hurt at your sudden explosion.'

'Poor man, indeed! and do you think I could stop to consider the feelings of an *insensate brute like that, when my own nerves were racked and torn to pieces by his confounded blunders?'

'I never heard you complain of your nerves before.'

'And why shouldn't I have nerves as well as you?'

'Oh, I don't dispute your claim to their possession, but I never complain of mine.'

'No, how should you, when you never do anything to try them?'

'Then why do you try yours, Arthur?'

'Do you think I have nothing to do but to stay at home and

stăpânul lui care-și împinse neglijent scaunul înapoi—și Benson se împiedică. Făcu un zgomot destul de puternic dat fiind că avea mâinile pline de veselă, dar fără altă pagubă decât spargerea unui castron. Însă, spre indescriptibila mea rușine și tulburare, Arthur îl luă furios în primire și-i adresă câteva înjurături vulgare și aspre. Bietul om păli și tremură vizibil în timp ce se apleca să ridice cioburile.

—N-a fost el de vină, Arthur. S-a împiedicat de covor. Și pe urmă nici n-a făcut poznă prea mare. Benson, lasă cioburile, poți să le strângi și mai târziu.

Bucuros de această îngăduință, Benson se grăbi să ne aducă desertul, apoi se retrase.

—Ce ți-a venit, Helen, să iei partea slugii împotriva mea—zise Arthur de îndată ce se închise ușa—când știai bine că sunt înnebunit?

—Nu știam că ești înnebunit, Arthur, iar bietul om a fost pur și simplu speriat și jignit de explozia ta neașteptată.

—La dracu, bietul om! Ce-ți închipui că pot să țin seama de sentimentele unei brute nesimțitoare ca el, când proprii mei nervi sânt iritați și chinuiți de poznele lui prostești?

—Parcă până acuma nu te-am auzit niciodată plângându-te de nervii tăi.

—Și mă rog de ce n-aș putea avea și eu nervi ca și tine?

—A, eu nu contest faptul că-i ai, dar nu mă plâng niciodată

take care of myself like a woman?'

'Is it impossible, then, to take care of yourself like a man when you go abroad? You told me that you could, and would too; and you promised—'

'Come, come, Helen, don't begin with that nonsense now; I can't bear it.'

'Can't bear what?—to be reminded of the promises you have broken?'

'Helen, you are cruel. If you knew how my heart throbbed, and how every nerve thrilled through me while you spoke, you would spare me. You can pity a *dolt of a servant for breaking a dish; but you have no compassion for me when my head is split in two and all on fire with this consuming fever.'

He leant his head on his hand, and sighed. I went to him and put my hand on his forehead. It was burning indeed.

'Then come with me into the drawing-room, Arthur; and don't take any more wine: you have taken several glasses since dinner, and eaten next to nothing all the day. How can that make you better?'

With some *coaxing and persuasion, I got him to leave the table. When the baby was brought I tried to amuse him with that; but poor little Arthur was cutting his teeth, and his father could not bear his complaints: sentence of immediate banishment was passed upon him on the first indication of fretfulness; and

de-ai mei.

—Nu—ar fi și de mirare, când nu faci niciodată nimic pentru a-i pune la încercare.

—Dar atunci tu de ce-i pui pe-ai tăi la încercare, Arthur?

—Crezi că n-am nimic altceva de făcut decât să stau acasă și să mă corcolesc ca o femeie?

—Asta înseamnă că e imposibil să-ți porți singur de grijă, ca un bărbat, când lipsești de acasă? Mi-ai spus că poți s-o faci—și că o vei face; si ai permis...

—Haide, haide, Helen, nu mai începe acuma cu prostiile alea! Nu le pot suporta.

—Ce nu poți suporta? Să ți se amintească de făgăduielile pe care le-ai călcat în picioare?

—Helen, ești de-a dreptul crudă. Dacă ai ști cum mi-a bătut inima și cum mi s-au înfiorat toți nervii în timp ce vorbeai, m-ai cruța. Tu ești în stare să compătimești un tâmpit de slugoi pentru că a spart un castron; și în schimb n-ai pic de milă pentru mine când îmi crapă capul și-mi arde ca pe jăratic din pricina acestei febre mistuitoare.

Și-a lăsat capul în mâini și a început sa ofteze. M-am apropiat de el și i-am pus palma pe frunte. Într-adevăr ardea.

—Atunci vino cu mine în salon, Arthur; si nu mai bea vin; ai și băut câteva pahare după cină și n-ai mâncat mai nimic toată ziua. Cum ai putea să te faci bine în felul ăsta?

because, in the course of the evening, I went to share his exile for a little while, I was reproached, on my return, for preferring my child to my husband. I found the latter reclining on the sofa just as I had left him.

'Well,' exclaimed the injured man, in a tone of pseudo-resignation. 'I thought I wouldn't send for you; I just thought I'd just see—how long it would please you to leave me alone.'

'I have not been very long, have I, Arthur? I have not been an hour, I'm sure.'

'Oh, of course, an hour is nothing to you, so pleasingly employed; but to me—'

'It has not been pleasingly employed,' interrupted I. 'I have been nursing our poor little baby, who is very far from being well, and I could not leave him till I got him to sleep.'

'Oh, to be sure, you're overflowing with kindness and pity for everything but me.'

'And why should I pity you?' what is the matter with you?'

'Well, that passes everything! After all the *wear and tear that I've had, when I come sick and weary, longing for comfort and expecting to find attention and kindness, at least, from my wife—she calmly asks me what is the matter with me!'

'There is nothing the matter with you,' returned I, 'except what you have wilfully brought upon yourself against my earnest *exhortation and *entreaty.'

Luându-l cu binișorul și străduindu-mă cât puteam să-l conving, l-am făcut să plece de la masă. Când Rachel mi-a adus copilașul am încercat să-l distrez cu ajutorul lui pe taică-su. Dar bietului băiețel îi ieșeau dinții, așa că Arthur nu i-a putut suporta scâncelile. De îndată ce a dat primele semne de nervozitate copilașul a fost condamnat la un exil imediat. Și pentru că în cursul serii m-am dus să împărtășesc o vreme cu el, surghiunul, la întoarcere am primit reproșuri aspre pentru că-l prefer pe copil soțului. Pe acesta l-am găsit tolănit pe canapea exact în starea în care-l lăsasem.

-Bravo! exclamă partea lezată pe un ton de resemnare prefăcută. Am zis că n-o să trimit totuși după tine. Am zis că să stau să aștept—să văd câtă vreme o să-ți facă plăcere să mă lași singur.

—Dar ce, Arthur, doar n-am lipsit mult. Sânt convinsă ca n-am stat nici un ceas.

—A, bineînțeles, o oră e un fleac pentru tine, din moment ce ți-o poți umple cu lucruri atât de plăcute: dar pentru mine...

—N-a fost vorba câtuși de puțin de lucruri plăcute, l-am întrerupt eu. L-am îngrijit pe bietul nostru băiețel care nu se simte deloc bine și nu puteam să-l părăsesc până ce nu l-am văzut adormind.

—A, firește, îi copleșești pe toți cu bunătatea și mila ta în afară de mine.

'Now, Helen,' said he emphatically, half rising from his *recumbent posture, 'if you bother me with another word, I'll ring the bell and order six bottles of wine—and, by Heaven, I'll drink them dry before I stir from this place!'

I said no more, but sat down before the table and drew a book towards me.

'Do let me have quietness at least,' continued he, 'if you deny me every other comfort,' and sinking back into his former position, with an impatient expiration between a sigh and a groan, he languidly closed his eyes as if to sleep.

What the book was, that lay open on the table before me, I cannot tell, for I never looked at it. With an elbow on each side of it, and my hands clasped before my eyes, I delivered myself up to silent weeping. But Arthur was not asleep: at the first slight sob, he raised his head and looked round, impatiently exclaiming—

'What are you crying for, Helen? What the deuce is the matter now?

'I'm crying for you, Arthur,' I replied, speedily drying my tears; and starting up I threw myself on my knees before him, and, clasping his nerveless hand between my own, continued: don't you know that you are a part of myself? And do you think you can injure and degrade yourself, and I not feel it?

'Degrade myself, Helen?'

—Dar de tine de ce-ar trebui să-mi fie milă? Ce-ai pățit?

—Ei, poftim! Asta le întrece pe toate! După atâtea necazuri și complicații prin care-am trecut, când mă întorc acasă bolnav și istovit, tânjind după alinare și așteptându-mă să mă bucur de atenție și amabilitate măcar din partea nevestii, ea mă întreabă calmă ce-i cu mine!

—N-ai absolut nimic—i-am răspuns—decât relele pe care ți le-ai adus singur, de bunăvoia ta, împotriva rugăminților și îndemnurilor mele cele mai solemne.

—Ascultă, Helen—mi-a spus el pe un ton apăsat încercând să se ridice în capul oaselor—dacă mă mai necăjești măcar cu o vorbă, sun imediat clopoțelul și poruncesc să mi se aducă șase sticle de vin și, pe legea mea, că le beau până la fund înainte de a mă mișca de aici!

N-am zis nimic, m-am așezat la masă și am întins mâna după o carte.

—Lasă-mă să am cel puțin liniște! a continuat el, dacă-mi refuzi toate celelalte consolări.

Și tolănindu-se la loc, respirând nervos ca și cum ar fi oftat sau ar fi gemut și-a închis apatic ochii.

Ce carte o fi fost aceea care stătea deschisă dinaintea mea n-aș putea spune, pentru că nici nu m-am uitat la ea. Stând cu coatele pe masă și acoperindu-mi ochii cu mâinile m-am lăsat pradă lacrimilor, fără zgomot. Dar Arthur nu dormea: la primul

'Yes, degrade! What have you been doing all this time?'

'You'd better not ask,' said he with a faint smile.

'And you had better not tell; but you cannot deny that you have degraded yourself miserably. You have shamefully wronged yourself, body and soul, and me too; and I can't endure it quietly—and I won't!

'Well, don't squeeze my hand so frantically, and don't agitate me so, for heaven's sake! Oh, Hattersley! [Arthur's friend] you were right: this woman will be the death of me, with her keen feelings and her interesting force of character. There, there, do spare me a little.'

'Arthur, you *must* repent!' cried I, in a frenzy of desperation, throwing my arms around him and burying my face in his bosom. 'You *shall* say you are sorry for what you have done!'

'Well, well, I am.'

'You are not! you'll do it again.'

'I shall never live to do it again if you treat me so savagely,' replied he, pushing me from him. 'You've nearly squeezed the breath out of my body.' He pressed his hand to his heart, and looked really agitated and ill.

'Now get me a glass of wine,' said he, 'to remedy what you've done, you she tiger! I'm almost ready to faint.'

I flew to get the required remedy. It seemed to revive him considerably. 'What a shame it is,' said I, as I took the empty

suspin ușor pe care l-am scos și-a ridicat capul și a privit în jur exclamând nervos:

—Pentru ce plângi, Helen? Ce naiba s-a mai întâmplat?

—Plâng pentru tine, Arthur, i-am răspuns ștergându-mi repede ochii. Și ridicându-mă de la masă m-am pus în genunchi în fața lui și strângându-i mâna inertă între ale mele am continuat: Nu știi că tu ești o părticică din mine? Crezi că poți să te înjosești și să-ți faci rău singur fără să simt și eu durerea?

—Să mă înjosesc, Helen?

—Da, să te înjosești! Ce altceva ai de făcut în tot timpul ăsta?

—Mai bine n-ai întreba, mi-a răspuns el schițând un zâmbet.

—Și tu ai face mai bine să nu-mi spui; dar nu poți nega că te-ai înjosit îngrozitor. În modul cel mai rușinos ți-ai făcut rău ție—trupește și sufletește—și mie așijderea; nu pot să îndur în tăcere acest lucru—și nu vreau s-o fac!

—Ei, nu-mi strânge așa, nebunește, mâna și nu mă zgudui atâta, pentru numele lui Dumnezeu! Vai, Hatersley! Ai avut dreptate! Femeia asta o să mă bage în mormânt cu sentimentele ei intense și cu personalitatea ei viguroasă și interesantă. Ei, haide, cruță-mă puțin.

—Arthur, trebuie neapărat să te căiești! am strigat eu într-un acces de desperare, înconjurându-l cu brațele și îngropându-mi fața la pieptul lui. Trebuie să spui că-ți pare rău de ceea ce ai făcut!

glass from his hand, 'for a strong man like you to reduce yourself to such a state!'

(in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* 243-6)

—Ei, mă rog, îmi pare rău.

—Ba nu e adevărat! Și-ai să-ți repeți greșeala.

—N-am să trăiesc destul ca s-o pot repeta, dacă te porți atât de sălbatic cu mine! a replicat el împingându-mă la o parte. M-ai strâns așa de tare că am rămas fără suflare.

Și-a dus mâna la inimă, și de fapt chiar părea să fie într-o stare proastă, de mare agitație.

—Ei, acuma adu-mi un pahar de vin ca să dregi ce-ai stricat, tigroaică ce ești! Îmi vine să leșin.

M-am repezit să-i aduc leacul cerut. Într-adevăr parcă începuse să-și revină.

—Vai, ce rușine pentru un tânăr ca tine—am zis eu luându-i paharul gol din mână—să te aduci singur într-o asemenea stare!

[Traducere de Andrei Bantaș, Editura Eminescu, București, 1974]

Helen's Revelation

Only suspected, now Huntington's adulterous relation with Lady Annabella Lowborough is fully revealed to Helen. The scene – contained in Helen's journal – is full of suffering and distress and expectation of God's helping hand. This revelation is crucial for Helen – it represents a turning-point in her life as she decides to approach her husband exclusively in a technical way: as his child's mother, as a housekeeper and, later on, as his nurse.

Without a word of comment or further questioning, I rose, and darted from the room and out of the house. The torment of suspense was not to be endured: I would not suspect my husband falsely, on this man's accusation, and I would not trust him unworthily—I must know the truth at once. I flew to the *shrubbery. Scarcely had I reached it, when a sound of voices arrested my breathless speed.

'We have lingered too long; he [Grimsby, a friend of Arthur's] will be back,' said Lady Lowborough's voice.

'Surely not, dearest!' was his reply; 'but you can run across the lawn, and get in as quietly as you can; I'll follow in a while.'

My knees trembled under me; my brain swam round. I was ready to faint. She must not see me thus. I shrunk among the bushes, and leant against the trunk of a tree to let her pass.

'Ah, Huntingdon!' said she reproachfully, pausing where I

Fără să fac vreun comentariu sau să-i mai pun vreo întrebare, am țâșnit afară din odaie și din casă. Chinul îndoielii și al așteptării devenise de nesuportat: nu voiam să-mi bănuiesc pe nedrept soțul, pe baza acuzațiilor aduse de acest domn și nici nu voiam să-i acord încredere fără s-o merite—trebuia neapărat să aflu pe dată adevărul. Am alergat până la parcul cu arbuști. Nici nu ajunsesem bine acolo când graba ce mă făcuse să-mi pierd respirația, mi-a fost stăvilită de sunetul unor glasuri.

—Am zăbovit prea mult; el o să se întoarcă, s-a auzit glasul lady-ei Lowborough.

—În nici un caz, iubito! a sunat răspunsul lui. Dar poți să traversezi în goană pajiștea și să intri în casă în cea mai mare taină. Eu am să te urmez după o vreme.

Au început să-mi tremure genunchii; mi se învârtea capul; eram gata să leșin. Ea nu trebuia în nici un caz să mă vadă

had stood with him the night before—it was here you kissed that woman!' she looked back into the leafy shade. Advancing thence, he answered, with a careless laugh, -

'Well, dearest, I couldn't help it. You know I must keep straight with her as long as I can. Haven't I seen you kiss your *dolt of a husband scores of times?—and do I ever complain?'

'But tell me, don't you love her still—a little?' said she, placing her hand on his arm, looking earnestly in his face—for I could see them, plainly, the moon shining full upon them from between the branches of the tree that sheltered me.

'Not one bit, by all that's sacred!' he replied, kissing her glowing cheek.

'Good heavens, I must be gone!' cried she, suddenly breaking from him, and away she flew.

There he stood before me; but I had not strength to confront him now: my tongue cleaved to the roof of my mouth; I was well-nigh sinking to the earth, and I almost wondered he did not hear the beating of my heart above the low sighing of the wind and the *fitful rustle of the falling leaves. My senses seemed to fail me, but still I saw his shadowy form pass before me, and through the rushing sound in my ears I distinctly heard him say, as he stood looking up the lawn—There goes the fool! Run, Annabella, run! There—in with you!' […].

'God help me now!' I murmured, sinking on my knees

în starea asta. M-am ascuns printre arbuști și m-am rezemat de un copac ca s-o las să treacă.

—Ah, Huntingdon! îi zise ea pe un ton de reproș, oprindu-se în locul în care stătusem eu cu el în seara anterioară... Aici ai sărutat-o pe femeia aceea! a reluat ea uitându-se înapoi către umbra aruncată de frunzișul copacului.

Apropriindu-se, el răspunse râzând nepăsător:

—Mde, iubito, n-am avut încotro. Știi bine că trebuie să păstrez aparențele în privința ei, cât mai mult timp cu putință. Parcă eu nu te-am văzut de zeci de ori sărutându-l pe imbecilul ăla de bărbat al tău? Și ce, eu mă plâng vreodată?

—Dar, spune-mi, sper că n-o mai iubești? zise ea lăsându-și mâna pe brațul lui și privindu-l drept în ochi (acum îi vedeam limpede fiindcă luna strălucea din plin pe fețele amândurora printre ramurile copacului ce mă adăpostea pe mine).

—Câtuși de puțin, îți jur pe ce am mai sfânt! îi răspunse el sărutându-i obrajii îmbujorați.

—Dumnezeule mare! Trebuie să plec! strigă ea smulgându-se brusc din brațele lui și îndepărtându-se.

El se afla exact în fața mea; dar n-aveam putere în momentul acela să-l înfrunt. Mi se lipise limba de cerul gurii, eram gata să mă prăbușesc și aproape că mă miram că nu-mi aude bătăile inimii pe deasupra vaierelor vântului și a foșnetului scos din când în când de frunzele ce cădeau.

among the damp weeds and brushwood that surrounded me, and looking up at the moonlit sky, through the scant foliage above. It seemed all dim and quivering now to my darkened sight. My burning, bursting heart strove to pour forth its agony to God, but could not frame its anguish into prayer; until a gust of wind swept over me, which, while it scattered the dead leaves, like blighted hopes, around, cooled my forehead, and seemed a little to revive my sinking frame. Then, while I lifted up my soul in speechless, earnest supplication, some heavenly influence seemed to strengthen me within: I breathed more freely; my vision cleared; I saw distinctly the pure moon shining on, and the light clouds *skimming the clear, dark sky; and then I saw the eternal stars twinkling down upon me; I knew their God was mine, and He was strong to save and swift to hear. 'I will never leave thee, nor *forsake thee,' seemed whispered from above their myriad orbs. No, no; I felt He would not leave me comfortless: in spite of earth and hell I should have strength for all my trials, and win a glorious rest at last!

Refreshed, invigorated, if not composed, I rose and returned to the house. Much of my new-born strength and courage forsook me, I confess, as I entered it, and shut out the fresh wind and the glorious sky: everything I saw and heard seemed to sicken my heart—the hall, the lamp, the staircase, the doors of the different apartments, the social sound of talk and laughter

Mi se părea că simțurile mă înșeală și mă părăsesc, dar am văzut silueta soțului meu trecând pe dinaintea mea și printre sunetele care mi se învălmășeau în urechi l-am auzit limpede strigând în timp ce privea spre pajiște:

—Uite că trece zevzecul! Fugi, Annabella, fugi! Așa... intră în casă! Ah, n-a văzut nimic! Bravo, Grimsby, reține-l cât poți! […]

„Acum Domnul sa mă aibă în pază!" am murmurat eu căzând în genunchi printre ierburile ude și buruienile care mă înconjurau și ridicând ochii spre cerul scăldat în lumina lunii, printre frunzișul rar de deasupra. Totul se înfățișa acum neclar și tremurător ochilor mei tulburi. Inima mea pârjolită, gata să plesnească, se străduia să-și reverse chinul în urechile Domnului, dar nu putea să-i dea expresia rugăciunii. M-a măturat o pală de vânt care, împrăștiind frunzele moarte ca niște speranțe năruite în jurul meu, mi-a răcorit fruntea și a părut să-mi mai învioreze puțin trupul prăbușit. Am început să respir mai ușor, vederea mi s-a limpezit, am putut să disting luna care strălucea pură și norii ușori care împiestrițau cerul senin și întunecat; apoi am zărit stelele nemuritoare care clipeau către mine.

Înviorată și întărită, dacă nu chiar liniștită, m-am ridicat și m-am întors în casă. O parte din forța și curajul pe care abia le recăpătasem, m-au părăsit—mărturisesc—când am intrat

from the drawing—room. How could I bear my future life! In this house, among those people—oh, how could I endure to live!

(in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* 291-2)

înăuntru și am lăsat afară prospețimea vântului și splendoarea cerului. Tot ce vedeam și auzeam părea să-mi facă rău la inimă: holul, lampa, scara, ușile diferitelor încăperi, conversația mondenă și râsetele din salon. Cum aveam să mai pot îndura viața mea în viitor? În casa asta, printre oamenii ăștia—cum o să mai suport să trăiesc?

[Traducere de Andrei Bantaș, Editura Eminescu, București, 1974]

George Eliot

(1819-1880)



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George Eliot (1819-1880) is the pseudonym of Mary Ann Cross, *née* Evans. She was born in 1819 in Nuneaton, Warwickshire and went to several schools there and in Coventry where she moved with her father in 1841. The result of this education is a solid knowledge of Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, German and Italian.

In spite of her provincial background she became one of the most remarkably learned persons of her age. Her first sustained literary activity was the translation of D. F. Strauss's *Das Leben Jesu kritisch bearbeitet*, which was published anonymously as *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, 3 vol. (1846), and had a profound influence on English rationalism.

After John Chapman, the publisher of her translation, got her a chance to publish in *The Westminster Review* (January 1851), she decided to settle in London as a free-lance writer, which she did in January 1851. There she worked for three years, until 1854, as subeditor of the advanced *The Westminster Review*, which, while under her influence, enjoyed its most brilliant run since the days of John Stuart Mill.

Herbert Spencer, the subeditor of *The Economist*, a man that she appreciated a lot and whose views she shared, introduced her to George Henry Lewes, biographer, translator and historian of philosophy. Her union with Lewes which lasted until his death proved a source of happiness and intellectual inspiration to both, though they never became legitimate husband and wife. It was Lewis who advocated her to try novel writing and stood by her in the process of creation.

Mary Ann Evans turned to early memories and, encouraged by Lewes, wrote several stories that were republished as *Scenes of Clerical Life*, 2 vol. (1858) under the pseudonym George Eliot. It was followed by *Adam Bede*, 3 vol. (1859) and *The Mill on the Floss* (1860). Both novels discuss the issue of social prejudice, illegitimacy, victims and the subsequent impossible love and family relations.

Her next novel was *Silas Marner* (1861), a work whose brevity and perfection of form made from its story—that of a weaver whose lost gold is replaced by a strayed child—the best known of her books.

At this time historical novels were in vogue, and during a visit to Florence in 1860 Lewes gave her the suggestion to write a novel on Savonarola—the religious radical who fought fiercely against the social and artistic mores of the Renaissance. George Eliot accepted the idea enthusiastically and the result was *Romola*, published as a serial in 14 parts between July 1862 and August 1863. Though appealing in its development, the book lacks the spontaneity of the English stories.

George Eliot's next two novels are laid in England at the time of agitation for the passage of the *Reform Bill (or Reform Act) of 1832. They are *Felix Holt, the Radical*, 3 vol. (1866), her only novel where she deals with politics, and *Middlemarch* (8 parts), which she published in instalments between 1871-1872, considered by general consent to be George Eliot's masterpiece. It was followed by *Daniel Deronda* (8 parts, 1876), a novel that contains some of George Eliot's most brilliant writing and turns round the idea of religious difference and human relations.

In 1878 Lewes died and she was left alone to take care of her life and creation. Most of all she missed the encouragement that alone made it possible for her to write. For months she saw no one but his son, Charles Lee Lewes, and devoted herself to her writing.

In early 1880 she married John Walter Cross, the banker who had been in charge of her investments. But their marriage was very short—she died in December 1880 and was buried at Highgate Cemetery.

George Eliot is a remarkable novelist who pushed Victorian literature one step further into modernism through her method of psychological analysis in an attempt to reveal and discuss the psychological motivation of her characters' acts. She adopted a strict mental discipline, precision, objectivity and realism of presentation in novels of intellectual debate, of elaborate but no less credible structure. George Eliot's characters come from different social walks, are of diverse professions, many are ordinary and humble people but nonetheless interesting to the writer as the source of her interest in life and love.

From *The Mill on the Floss*

The Mill on the Floss (1860) contains to a certain degree autobiographical material—Maggie and Tom Tulliver, the main heroes of the novel, are projections of young Mary Evans and her brother.

Maggie's drama is caused by the conflict between her somewhat immature, naïve and passionate nature, her intense sensibility and artistic tastes and the conventional and Phillistinic perceptions of puritan morality of the community, her attempt to remain truthful to her family and those who surround her. Tom, her brother, is situated at the different pole; he is a prosaic young man and is well integrated into the requirements of society. The incongruity of Maggie's character with the people around her as well as Tom's attitude of inflexibility and his opposing temperament generate the tragic separation between sister and brother.

As usual with George Eliot, remarkable are the construction of the novel with scenes where the pace of the narration varies dramatically (Jedrzejewski 46) and her concern to create motivated characters. *The Mill on the Floss* is mainly a novel in which the moral problems of character are placed within the relation between characters and different members of a community. The novel's tone is emotional, sometimes too much so, which gives the impression that it is the work of a passionate but talented person coming of age.

Dorlcote Mill

The extract below reveals to the reader the setting of the novel, a place of breathtaking beauty bathed in the nostalgic light of memory. Noteworthy is Eliot's use of the narrating 'I', the authorial 'second self' (Ebbatson 35) meant to signal the presence of an omniscient author, create a link between the past and present and propose the readers a sort of a 'secret contract' between them and the author (Ebbatson 39).

A wide plain, where the broadening Floss hurries on between its green banks to the sea, and the loving tide, rushing to meet it, checks its passage with an impetuous embrace. On this mighty tide the black ships—laden with the fresh-scented fir-planks, with rounded sacks of oil-bearing seed, or with the dark glitter of coal—are borne along to the town of St. Ogg's, which shows its aged, fluted red roofs and the broad gables of its wharves between the low wooded hill and the river-brink, tingeing the water with a soft purple hue under the transient glance of this February sun. Far away on each hand stretch the rich pastures, and the patches of dark earth made ready for the seed of broad-leaved green crops, or touched already with the tint of the tender-bladed autumn-sown corn. There is a remnant still of last year's golden clusters of beehive-ricks rising at intervals beyond the hedgerows; and everywhere the hedgerows are studded with trees; the distant ships seem to be lifting their masts and stretching their red-brown sails close among the branches of the spreading ash. Just by the red-roofed town the tributary Ripple flows with a lively current into the Floss. How lovely the little river is, with its dark changing wavelets! It seems to me like a living companion while I wander along the bank, and listen to its low, placid voice, as to the voice of one who is deaf and loving. I remember those large dipping willows. I remember the stone bridge.

And this is Dorlcote Mill. I must stand a minute or two here on the bridge and look at it, though the clouds are threatening, and it is far on in the afternoon. Even in this leafless time of departing February it is pleasant to look at,—perhaps the chill, damp season adds a charm to the trimly kept, comfortable dwelling-house, as old as the elms and chestnuts that shelter it from the northern blast. The stream is brimful now, and lies high in this little withy plantation, and half drowns the grassy fringe of the croft in front of the house. As I look at the full stream, the vivid grass, the delicate bright-green powder softening the outline of the great trunks and branches that gleam from under the bare purple boughs, I am in love with moistness, and envy the white ducks that are dipping their heads far into the water here among the withes, unmindful of the awkward appearance they make in the drier world above.

The rush of the water and the booming of the mill bring a dreamy deafness, which seems to heighten the peacefulness of the scene. They are like a great curtain of sound, shutting one out from the world beyond. And now there is the thunder of the huge covered wagon coming home with sacks of grain. That honest waggoner is thinking of his dinner, getting sadly dry in the oven

at this late hour; but he will not touch it till he has fed his horses,—the strong, submissive, *meek-eyed beasts, who, I fancy, are looking mild reproach at him from between their *blinkers, that he should crack his whip at them in that awful manner as if they needed that hint! See how they stretch their shoulders up the slope toward the bridge, with all the more energy because they are so near home. Look at their grand shaggy feet that seem to grasp the firm earth, at the patient strength of their necks, bowed under the heavy collar, at the mighty muscles of their struggling haunches! I should like well to hear them neigh over their hardly earned feed of corn, and see them, with their moist necks freed from the harness, dipping their eager nostrils into the muddy pond. Now they are on the bridge, and down they go again at a swifter pace, and the arch of the covered wagon disappears at the turning behind the trees.

Now I can turn my eyes toward the mill again, and watch the unresting wheel sending out its diamond jets of water. That little girl is watching it too; she has been standing on just the same spot at the edge of the water ever since I paused on the bridge. And that queer white *cur with the brown ear seems to be leaping and barking in ineffectual remonstrance with the wheel; perhaps he is jealous because his playfellow in the beaver bonnet is so rapt in its movement. It is time the little playfellow went in, I think; and there is a very bright fire to tempt her: the red light shines out under the deepening gray of the sky. It is time, too, for me to leave off resting my arms on the cold stone of this bridge..

Ah, my arms are really benumbed. I have been pressing my elbows on the arms of my chair, and dreaming that I was standing on the bridge in front of Dorlcote Mill, as it looked one February afternoon many years ago. Before I dozed off, I was going to tell you what Mr. and Mrs. Tulliver were talking about, as they sat by the bright fire in the left-hand parlour, on that very afternoon I have been dreaming of.

(in *The Mill on the Floss* 3-5)

I'm Come Back to You

The scene below contains the dramatic moment of Maggie's return, after the local community ostracised her and her brother turned her out of the house for having gone away in a boat down the river with Mr Stephen Guest, the man her cousin and friend Lucy was engaged to be married with.

She lifted the latch of the gate and walked in slowly. Tom did not hear the gate; he was just then close upon the roaring dam; but he presently turned, and lifting up his eyes, saw the figure whose worn look and loneliness seemed to him a confirmation of his worst conjectures. He paused, trembling and white with disgust and indignation.

Maggie paused too, three yards before him. She felt the hatred in his face, felt it rushing through her fibres; but she must speak.

'Tom,' she began faintly, 'I am come back to you,—I am come back home—for refuge—to tell you everything.'

'You will find no home with me,' he answered, with tremulous rage. 'You have disgraced us all. You have disgraced my father's name. You have been a curse to your best friends. You have been base, deceitful; no motives are strong enough to restrain you. I wash my hands of you forever. You don't belong to me.'

Their mother had come to the door now. She stood paralyzed by the double shock of seeing Maggie and hearing Tom's words.

'Tom,' said Maggie, with more courage, 'I am perhaps not so guilty as you believe me to be. I never meant to give way to my feelings. I struggled against them. I was carried too far in the boat to come back on Tuesday. I came back as soon as I could.'

'I can't believe in you any more,' said Tom, gradually passing from the tremulous excitement of the first moment to cold inflexibility. 'You have been carrying on a clandestine relation with Stephen Guest,—as you did before with another [Philip Wakem]. He went to see you at my aunt Moss's; you walked alone with him in the lanes; you must have behaved as no modest girl would have done to her cousin's lover, else that could never have happened. The people at Luckreth saw you pass; you

passed all the other places; you knew what you were doing. You have been using Philip Wakem as a screen to deceive Lucy,—the kindest friend you ever had. Go and see the return you have made her. She's ill; unable to speak. My mother can't go near her, lest she should remind her of you.'

Maggie was half stunned,—too heavily pressed upon by her anguish even to discern any difference between her actual guilt and her brother's accusations, still less to vindicate herself.

'Tom,' she said, crushing her hands together under her cloak, in the effort to speak again, 'whatever I have done, I repent it bitterly. I want to make amends. I will endure anything. I want to be kept from doing wrong again.'

'What *will* keep you?' said Tom, with cruel bitterness. 'Not religion; not your natural feelings of gratitude and honour. And he—he would deserve to be shot, if it were not—but you are ten times worse than he is. I loathe your character and your conduct. You struggled with your feelings, you say. Yes! *I* have had feelings to struggle with; but I conquered them. I have had a harder life than you have had; but I have found *my* comfort in doing my duty. But I will sanction no such character as yours; the world shall know that *I feel* the difference between right and wrong. If you are in want, I will provide for you; let my mother know. But you shall not come under my roof. It is enough that I have to bear the thought of your disgrace; the sight of you is hateful to me.'

Slowly Maggie was turning away with despair in her heart. But the poor frightened mother's love leaped out now, stronger than all dread.

'My child! I'll go with you. You've got a mother.'

Oh, the sweet rest of that embrace to the *heart-stricken Maggie! More helpful than all wisdom is one draught of simple human pity that will not forsake us.

Tom turned and walked into the house.

'Come in, my child,' Mrs. Tulliver whispered. 'He'll let you stay and sleep in my bed. He won't deny that if I ask him.'

'No, mother,' said Maggie, in a low tone, like a moan. 'I will never go in.'

'Then wait for me outside. I'll get ready and come with you.'

When his mother appeared with her bonnet on, Tom came out to her in the passage, and put money into her hands.

'My house is yours, mother, always,' he said. 'You will come and let me know everything you want; you will come back to me.'

Poor Mrs. Tulliver took the money, too frightened to say anything. The only thing clear to her was the mother's instinct that she would go with her unhappy child.

Maggie was waiting outside the gate; she took her mother's hand and they walked a little way in silence.

(in *The Mill on the Floss* 496-8)

The Final Rescue

The extract below is taken from the last chapter of the novel. It is the dramatic and tragic scene of the reunification of the two separated brothers. After heavy rains the river Floss floods the town and Dorclote Mill with Tom trapped inside. In spite of everything, Maggie's first thought is her brother and consequently, in a touching gesture of brotherly love and sacrifice, she comes to the mill in a boat in an attempt to rescue her brother, but their boat is overwhelmed by the huge mass of water and the two brothers drown after a moment of revelation in a final embrace of reconciliation. What could not be a fact in this world has now become a fact in the world beyond.

With new resolution, Maggie seized her oar, and stood up again to paddle; but the now ebbing tide added to the swiftness of the river, and she was carried along beyond the bridge. She could hear shouts from the windows overlooking the river, as if the people there were calling to her. It was not till she had passed on nearly to Tofton that she could get the boat clear of the current. Then with one yearning look toward her uncle Deane's house that lay farther down the river, she took to both her oars and rowed with all her might across the watery fields, back toward the Mill. Colour was beginning to awake now, and as she approached the Dorlcote fields, she could discern the tints of the trees, could see the old Scotch firs far to the right, and the home chestnuts,—oh, how deep they lay in the water,—deeper than the trees on this side the hill! And the roof of the Mill—where was it? Those heavy fragments hurrying down the Ripple,—what had they meant? But it was not the house,—the house stood firm; drowned up to the first story, but still firm,—or was it broken in at the end toward the Mill?

With panting joy that she was there at last,—joy that overcame all distress,—Maggie neared the front of the house. At first she heard no sound; she saw no object moving. Her boat was on a level with the upstairs window. She called out in a loud, piercing voice,—

'Tom, where are you? Mother, where are you? Here is Maggie!'

Soon, from the window of the attic in the central gable, she heard Tom's voice,—

'Who is it? Have you brought a boat?'

'It is I, Tom,—Maggie. Where is mother?'

'She is not here; she went to Garum the day before yesterday. I'll come down to the lower window.'

'Alone, Maggie?' said Tom, in a voice of deep astonishment, as he opened the middle window, on a level with the boat.

'Yes, Tom; God has taken care of me, to bring me to you. Get in quickly. Is there no one else?'

'No,' said Tom, stepping into the boat; 'I fear the man is drowned; he was carried down the Ripple, I think, when part of the Mill fell with the crash of trees and stones against it; I've shouted again and again, and there has been no answer. Give me the oars, Maggie.'

It was not till Tom had pushed off and they were on the wide water,—he face to face with Maggie,—that the full meaning of what had happened rushed upon his mind. It came with so overpowering a force,—it was such a new revelation to his spirit, of the depths in life that had lain beyond his vision, which he had fancied so keen and clear,—that he was unable to ask a question. They sat mutely gazing at each other,—Maggie with eyes of intense life looking out from a weary, beaten face; Tom pale, with a certain awe and humiliation. Thought was busy though the lips were silent; and though he could ask no question, he guessed a story of almost miraculous, divinely protected effort. But at last a mist gathered over the blue-gray eyes, and the lips found a word they could utter,—the old childish 'Magsie!'

Maggie could make no answer but a long, deep sob of that mysterious, wondrous happiness that is one with pain.

As soon as she could speak, she said, 'We will go to Lucy, Tom; we'll go and see if she is safe, and then we can help the rest.'

Tom rowed with untired vigour, and with a different speed from poor Maggie's. The boat was soon in the current of the river again, and soon they would be at Tofton.

'Park House stands high up out of the flood,' said Maggie. 'Perhaps they have got Lucy there.'

Nothing else was said; a new danger was being carried toward them by the river. Some wooden machinery had just given way on one of the wharves, and huge fragments were being floated along. The sun was rising now, and the wide area of watery desolation was spread out in dreadful clearness around them; in dreadful clearness floated onward the hurrying, threatening masses. A large company in a boat that was working its way along under the Tofton houses observed their danger, and shouted, 'Get out of the current!'

But that could not be done at once; and Tom, looking before him, saw death rushing on them. Huge fragments, clinging together in fatal fellowship, made one wide mass across the stream.

'It is coming, Maggie!' Tom said, in a deep, hoarse voice, loosing the oars, and clasping her.

The next instant the boat was no longer seen upon the water, and the huge mass was hurrying on in hideous triumph.

But soon the keel of the boat reappeared, a black speck on the golden water.

The boat reappeared, but brother and sister had gone down in an embrace never to be parted; living through again in one supreme moment the days when they had clasped their little hands in love, and roamed the daisied fields together.

(in *The Mill on the Floss* 532-4)

From *Silas Marner*

Silas Marner (1861) is a fable of fellowship, reward, punishment and an extraordinary tale of love and hope, of humble friendships set in the earlier years of the nineteenth century. As Jedrzejewski points out (51) it is a moral and psychological investigation of problems such as parent-child relationships, childlessness and adoption. The novel also explores the issues of redemptive love, the notion of community, the role of religion, and the status of the gentry and family. While religion and religious devotion play a strong part in this text, Eliot concerns herself once more with matters of ethics placed apart from religion.

All of these give the novel strong moral dimensions. The result is that bad characters such as Dunstan Cass get their just punishment, while good, pitiable characters such as Silas Marner are deservedly rewarded.

George Eliot's text—with its criticism on organised religion, the role of the gentry, and the impact of industrialisation—is more than a simple tale. Since the novel was written in the period during the Industrial Revolution, it may also be read as a reaction against it, a human reaction against mechanicism.

The Days of the Spinning-Wheels

The text below which starts the novel is a portrait of the Midlands in England during the days of the Industrial Revolution in the first part of the nineteenth century.

In the days when the spinning-wheels hummed busily in the farmhouses—and even great ladies, clothed in silk and thread-lace, had their toy spinning-wheels of polished oak—there might be seen in districts far away among the lanes, or deep in

În vremurile când roțile de tors zumzăiau fără contenire prin gospădăriile sătești, și când însăși doamnele din lumea bună, cele învășmântate în mătăsuri și fireturi, își aveau propria lor roată de tors din lemn de stejar lustruit, bineînțeles de jucărie, în

the bosom of the hills, certain pallid undersized men, who, by the side of the brawny country-folk, looked like the remnants of a disinherited race. The shepherd's dog barked fiercely when one of these alien-looking men appeared on the upland, dark against the early winter sunset; for what dog likes a figure bent under a heavy bag?—and these pale men rarely stirred abroad without that mysterious burden. The shepherd himself, though he had good reason to believe that the bag held nothing but flaxen thread, or else the long rolls of strong linen spun from that thread, was not quite sure that this trade of weaving, indispensable though it was, could be carried on entirely without the help of the Evil One. In that far-off time superstition clung easily round every person or thing that was at all unwonted, or even intermittent and occasional merely, like the visits of the pedlar or the knife-grinder. No one knew where wandering men had their homes or their origin; and how was a man to be explained unless you at least knew somebody who knew his father and mother? To the peasants of old times, the world outside their own direct experience was a region of vagueness and mystery: to their untravelled thought a state of wandering was a conception as dim as the winter life of the swallows that came back with the spring; and even a settler, if he came from distant parts, hardly ever ceased to be viewed with a remnant of distrust, which would have prevented any surprise

acele vremuri puteai vedea prin locuri depărtate, la mijloc de drum între poteci, sau pierdute prin viroagele dintre dealuri, niște oameni gălbejiți și scunzi peste măsură, care, măsurați după statura țăranilor vânjoși, păreau rămășițe ale unui neam dezmoștenit. Dulăul ciobanului hămăia îndârjit când apărea pe culme vreunul dintre acești oameni cu înfățișare străină, umbră întunecoasă profilată pe fondul apusului timpuriu de iarnă; cărui câine putea să-i placă o siluetă încovoiată sub un sac greu? or, acești bărbați palizi rareori porneau la drum fără acea povară ciudată. Însuși ciobanul, deși era întru totul îndreptățit să socoată că în sac nu ascundea nimic altceva decât ață de in sau poate suluri lungi de pânză tare, lucrată din același fir, nu era pe de-a-ntregul convins că, oricât de folositoare ar fi fost, meseria aceasta de țesător putea da roade fără o mână de ajutor din partea diavolului. În acele vremuri mult îndepărtate, nimbul superstiției aureola orice persoană sau orice lucru complet ieșit din comun, sau numai când și când neobișnuit ori, pur și simplu, străin din întâmplare, cum ar fi vizita negustorului ambulant sau a tocilarului. Nimeni nu știa unde își aveau căminul acești rătăcitori sau de unde veneau; dar, cum puteai ajunge la o concluzie în legătură cu cineva dacă nu găseai nici măcar un om care să-i cunoască mama sau tatăl? Pentru țăranii de odinioară lumea exterioară trăirii lor directe constituia un tărâm al nesiguranței și al misterelor; pentru gândirea lor lipsită de

if a long course of inoffensive conduct on his part had ended in the commission of a crime; especially if he had any reputation for knowledge, or showed any skill in handicraft. All cleverness, whether in the rapid use of that difficult instrument the tongue, or in some other art unfamiliar to villagers, was in itself suspicious: honest folk, born and bred in a visible manner, were mostly not overwise or clever—at least, not beyond such a matter as knowing the signs of the weather; and the process by which rapidity and dexterity of any kind were acquired was so wholly hidden, that they partook of the nature of conjuring. In this way it came to pass that those scattered linen-weavers—emigrants from the town into the country—were to the last regarded as aliens by their rustic neighbours, and usually contracted the eccentric habits which belong to a state of loneliness.

(in *Silas Marner* 1-2)

experiența călătoriilor, starea celui ce rătăcește din loc în loc reprezenta un concept la fel de încețoșat ca și viața din timpul iernii a rândunelelor ce reapar o dată cu primăvara; ba și un om ce se așeza într-un loc de care era străin, dacă sosea dintr-o regiune îndepărtată, cu greu putea fi cruțat de o primire neîncrezătoare care, la urma urmelor, ar fi prevenit orice fel de surpriză provocată de un eventual delict ulterior, oricât de inofensivă ar fi fost comportarea lui pentru moment; cu atât mai grav dacă el își crea un renume prin cunoștințele sale, sau dacă ar fi dat dovadă de o îndemânare cât de mică pentru meserii. Era suspectă, din principiu, orice dibăcie, fie în folosirea rapidă a acelei unelte greu de mânuit, pe nume limba, fie în vreun alt meșteșug neobișnuit pentru săteni; țăranii cinstiți, născuți și crescuți în văzul tuturor, în marea lor majoritate, nu erau deosebit de inteligenți sau de isteți, în orice caz nu mai mult decât este necesar pentru a discerne semnele vremii; cât despre mijlocul prin care se dobândește agerimea și îndemânarea de orice fel, le era atât de pe deplin tăinuit, încât puneau acestea pe seama vrăjilor. De aceea, țesătorii aceia risipiți ici și colo, emigrând din orașe la țară, erau priviți de către vecinii lor, fără nici o excepție, ca străini, și astfel dobândeau de cele mai deseori obiceiuri excentrice, tributare singurătății lor.

[Traducere de Mihai Rădulescu, Editura pentru Literatură Universală, București, 1969]

The Little Girl

The fragment inserted below records the moments on New Year's Eve when Silas, broken-hearted from the fact that his money was stolen from him, finds a girl in his home and has the revelation that the stolen treasure can be replaced with another one, more precious: a human being. The girl, who will be given the name of Eppie, is Silas's Christmas present on the day of Nativity, which will symbolically mean for him a new birth into a new life.

Turning towards the hearth, where the two logs had fallen apart, and sent forth only a red uncertain glimmer, he seated himself on his fireside chair, and was stooping to push his logs together, when, to his blurred vision, it seemed as if there were gold on the floor in front of the hearth. Gold!—his own gold—brought back to him as mysteriously as it had been taken away! He felt his heart begin to beat violently, and for a few moments he was unable to stretch out his hand and grasp the restored treasure. The heap of gold seemed to glow and get larger beneath his agitated gaze. He leaned forward at last, and stretched forth his hand; but instead of the hard coin with the familiar resisting outline, his fingers encountered soft warm curls. In utter amazement, Silas fell on his knees and bent his head low to examine the marvel: it was a sleeping child—a round, fair thing, with soft yellow rings all over its head. Could this be his little sister come back to him in a dream—his little sister whom he had carried about in his arms for a year before

Întorcându-se spre vatră, unde cei doi bușteni se despărțiseră și răspândeau o slabă licărire roșie, se așeză pe scaunul de lângă cămin și se aplecă să rezeme buștenii unul de celălalt, când, privirile sale încețoșate părură să distingă aur pe podea, îndreptul vetrei. Aur! aurul lui readus la fel de misterios cum îi fusese luat. Își simți inima bătând violent și, timp de câteva clipe, nu fu capabil să-și întindă mâinile și să-și apuce comoara reîntoarsă. Grămada de aur părea să lucească și să crească sub privirea lui neliniștită. În cele din urmă se aplecă și întinse mâna, dar în locul monedelor, cu marginea tare și binecunoscută, degetele sale întâlniră niște bucle moi și calde. În stupoarea sa, Silas căzu în genunchi și-și aplecă mult capul pentru a cerceta minunea; era un copil adormit, ceva rotund și blond, cu capul acoperit de inele mătăsoase, galbene. Să fie sora lui cea mică, care revenise într-un vis, surioara lui pe care o purtase în brațe aproape un an, după care murise, atunci când el era un băiețaș desculț? Acesta fu primul gând ce-i veni în minte.

she died, when he was a small boy without shoes or stockings? That was the first thought that darted across Silas's blank wonderment. *Was* it a dream? He rose to his feet again, pushed his logs together, and, throwing on some dried leaves and sticks, raised a flame; but the flame did not disperse the vision—it only lit up more distinctly the little round form of the child, and its shabby clothing. It was very much like his little sister. Silas sank into his chair powerless, under the double presence of an inexplicable surprise and a hurrying influx of memories. How and when had the child come in without his knowledge? He had never been beyond the door. But along with that question, and almost thrusting it away, there was a vision of the old home and the old streets leading to Lantern Yard—and within that vision another, of the thoughts which had been present with him in those far-off scenes. The thoughts were strange to him now, like old friendships impossible to revive; and yet he had a dreamy feeling that this child was somehow a message come to him from that far-off life: it stirred fibres that had never been moved in Raveloe—old quiverings of tenderness—old impressions of awe at the presentiment of some Power presiding over his life; for his imagination had not yet extricated itself from the sense of mystery in the child's sudden presence, and had formed no conjectures of ordinary natural means by which the event could have been brought about.

Să fi fost oare vis? Se ridică în picioare din nou, apropie buștenii și zvârlind peste ei câteva frunze moarte și câteva bețe, focul reînvie, dar flacăra nu alungă vedenia, lumina doar mai bine copilul și îmbrăcămintea sa jerpelită. Semăna mult cu surioara lui. Silas se prăbuși fără putere pe un scaun, copleșit de dubla lovitură a surprizei inexplicabile și a amintirilor năvalnice. Cum și când intrase fără știrea lui? Nu ieșise din casă. O dată cu această întrebare, și aproape izgonind-o din minte, Silas revedea căminul bătrânesc și vechile străzi ce duceau spre Lantern Yard, iar împreună cu această imagine îi reveniră gândurile de altădată. Acum aceste gânduri erau străine, așa cum sunt vechile prietenii, cu neputință de reînviat; totuși trăia un sentiment vag ce îi spunea că acest copil era, într-un anume mod, trimis lui dintr-o viață îndepărtată; se simțea cuprins de fiori, emoționat cum nu mai fusese niciodată de când se afla în Raveloe, subjugat de vechi freamăte ale unei spaime vechi stârnite de presimțirea unei forțe ce i-ar conduce viața; asta pentru că închipuirea sa nu se smulsese încă din senzația de mister, trezită de neașteptata prezență a copilului.

Dar se auzi un strigăt dinspre vatră: se trezise copilul, și Marner se aplecă să-l ridice pe genunchi. I se agăță de gât și începu să strige „mămico” și alte cuvinte de neînțeles, exprimându-și zăpăceala de a fi trezită. Silas îl lipi de piept și aproape inconștient scoase câteva sunete de o tandrețe reținută.

But there was a cry on the hearth: the child had awaked, and Marner stooped to lift it on his knee. It clung round his neck, and burst louder and louder into that mingling of inarticulate cries with 'mammy' by which little children express the bewilderment of waking. Silas pressed it to him, and almost unconsciously uttered sounds of hushing tenderness, while he bethought himself that some of his porridge, which had got cool by the dying fire, would do to feed the child with if it were only warmed up a little.

He had plenty to do through the next hour. The porridge, sweetened with some dry brown sugar from an old store which he had refrained from using for himself, stopped the cries of the little one, and made her lift her blue eyes with a wide quiet gaze at Silas, as he put the spoon into her mouth. Presently she slipped from his knee and began to toddle about, but with a pretty stagger that made Silas jump up and follow her lest she should fall against anything that would hurt her. But she only fell in a sitting posture on the ground, and began to pull at her boots, looking up at him with a crying face as if the boots hurt her. He took her on his knee again, but it was some time before it occurred to Silas's dull bachelor mind that the wet boots were the grievance, pressing on her warm ankles. He got them off with difficulty, and baby was at once happily occupied with the primary mystery of her own toes, inviting Silas, with much

Își aminti că mâncarea sa, ce se răcise lângă focul stins, ar fi putut hrăni copilul, dacă ar fi încălzit-o puțin.

În decursul orei următoare nu-și mai văzu capul de treburi. Terciul, îndulcit cu niște zahăr vechi și înnegrit dintr-o provizie de demult, din care nu folosise pentru sine, liniști țipetele, și atunci când îi duse lingura la gură copilul își ridică ochii albaștri și mari privindu-l pe Silas liniștit. Pe dată îi alunecă de pe genunchi, și începu să țopăie prin jur clătinându-se, din care cauză Silas sări în picioare pentru a-l prinde, ca nu cumva să cadă și să se lovească de ceva. Căzu în șezut pe jos și începu să tragă de ghete și să plângă, de parcă ghetele ar fi strâns-o. El o sui din nou pe genunchi, dar numai după câtva timp își dădu seama că plângea din cauza pantofiorilor uzi ce-i strângeau gleznele calde. Le scoase cu greutate, și copilul fericit începu imediat să fie preocupat de degetele de la picioare, îmbiindu-l pe Silas cu nenumărate chicoteli să le studieze și el. În cele din urmă, pantofiorii uzi îi sugerară lui Silas că copilul a umblat prin zăpadă, și se gândi cum o fi ajuns singur în casă.

Sub influența acestei idei, și fără să mai caute a înțelege împrejurările, ridică în brațe copilul și se îndreptă spre ușă. De îndată ce o deschise, fetița strigă din nou: „mămico," strigăt pe care Silas nu-l mai auzise de când fusese trezită de foame. Aplecându-se înainte, abia putu vedea urmele piciorușelor în zăpada imaculată și le urmări până la răchită. „Mămico," strigă

chuckling, to consider the mystery too. But the wet boots had at last suggested to Silas that the child had been walking on the snow, and this roused him from his entire oblivion of any ordinary means by which it could have entered or been brought into his house. Under the prompting of this new idea, and without waiting to form conjectures, he raised the child in his arms, and went to the door. As soon as he had opened it, there was the cry of 'mammy' again, which Silas had not heard since the child's first hungry waking. Bending forward, he could just discern the marks made by the little feet on the virgin snow, and he followed their track to the furze bushes. 'Mammy!' the little one cried again and again, stretching itself forward so as almost to escape from Silas's arms, before he himself was aware that there was something more than the bush before him—that there was a human body [the child's dead mother], with the head sunk low in the furze, and half-covered with the shaken snow.

(in *Silas Marner* 129-32)

din nou cea mică, întinzându-se, gata să cadă din brațele lui Silas, care nu văzu că în fața lui, în afară de copac, mai exista ceva, un trup omenesc pe jumătate acoperit de zăpada scuturată de pe crengi.

[Traducere de Mihai Rădulescu, Editura pentru Literatură Universală, București, 1969]

The Old Father

The scene below is a continuation over the years of the scene above. What then happened in feverish gestures is now expressed in words.

Between eight and nine o'clock that evening, Eppie and Silas were seated alone in the cottage. After the great excitement the weaver had undergone from the events of the afternoon, he had felt a longing for this quietude, and had even begged Mrs. Winthrop and Aaron, who had naturally lingered behind every one else, to leave him alone with his child. The excitement had not passed away: it had only reached that stage when the keenness of the susceptibility makes external stimulus intolerable—when there is no sense of weariness, but rather an intensity of inward life, under which sleep is an impossibility. Any one who has watched such moments in other men remembers the brightness of the eyes and the strange definiteness that comes over coarse features from that transient influence. It is as if a new fineness of ear for all spiritual voices had sent wonder-working vibrations through the heavy mortal frame—as if 'beauty born of murmuring sound' had passed into the face of the listener.

Silas's face showed that sort of transfiguration, as he sat in his arm-chair and looked at Eppie. She had drawn her own chair

În acea seară, Eppie și Silas ședeau singuri în casa lor. După puternicele emoții prin care trecuse țesătorul, ca urmare a evenimentelor din după-amiaza respectivă, Silas tânjise după liniște și îi rugase pe doamna Winthrop și pe Aaron, care, așa cum era normal, zăboviseră mai îndelung ca ceilalți, să-l lase singur cu copilul său. Emoțiile nu dispăruseră, ci dimpotrivă deveniseră atât de puternice, încât făceau de nesuportat orice eveniment exterior, oboseala dispărând cu totul și frământarea lăuntrică intensificându-se în așa fel încât somnul deveni o imposibilitate. Oricine a urmărit astfel de stări la alții își amintește de strălucirea ochilor și de ciudata accentuare a trăsăturilor celor mai grosolane ale feței. E ca și când o nouă sensibilitate a auzului, atent la toate glasurile cerești, ar răspândi în structura greoaie și muritoare a trupului vibrații aducătoare de minuni, ca și când „frumusețea născută din sunet șoptitor” ar fi străbătut chipul ascultătorului.

Obrazul lui Silas era oglinda acestei transfigurări, așa cum stătea în fotoliul său privind-o pe Eppie. Ea își trăsese scaunul în apropierea genunchilor lui și se aplecase înainte, ținându-l de ambele mâini și privind în sus spre el. Pe masa de lângă el,

towards his knees, and leaned forward, holding both his hands, while she looked up at him. On the table near them, lit by a candle, lay the recovered gold—the old long-loved gold, ranged in orderly heaps, as Silas used to range it in the days when it was his only joy. He had been telling her how he used to count it every night, and how his soul was utterly desolate till she was sent to him.

'At first, I'd a sort o' feeling come across me now and then,' he was saying in a subdued tone, 'as if you might be changed into the gold again; for sometimes, turn my head which way I would, I seemed to see the gold; and I thought I should be glad if I could feel it, and find it was come back. But that didn't last long. After a bit, I should have thought it was a curse come again, if it had drove you from me, for I'd got to feel the need o' your looks and your voice and the touch o' your little fingers. You didn't know then, Eppie, when you were such a little *un—you didn't know what your old father Silas felt for you.'

'But I know now, father,' said Eppie. 'If it hadn't been for you, they'd have taken me to the workhouse, and there'd have been nobody to love me.'

'Eh, my precious child, the blessing was mine. If you hadn't been sent to save me, I should ha' gone to the grave in my misery. The money was taken away from me in time; and you see it's been kept—kept till it was wanted for you. It's wonderful—our

luminat de lumânare, se vedea aurul, acum din nou al lor, vechiul aur mult îndrăgit, ordonat în grămezi, așa cum obișnuia Silas să-l aranjeze în zilele când constituia unica sa bucurie. Îi povestise lui Eppie cum avea obiceiul să-l numere în fiecare noapte și cum era foarte trist înainte de venirea ei.

—La început mă cuprindea uneori un fel de presentiment că te-ai putea preschimba în aur, spuse cu glas stins, doarece oriunde întorceam capul mi se părea că văd aur și socoteam că aș fi fost fericit să-l pot pipăi iar și să constat că e din nou al meu. Dar n-a ținut mult. Curând am ajuns să consider eventualitatea de a te pierde drept un nou blestem, deoarece începusem să mă obișnuiesc cu privirea ta, cu glasul tău și cu mângâierea degetelor tale mici. Nu știai atunci, Eppie, căci erai prea mică, ce simțea bătrânul tău tată.

—Dar acum știu, tăticule, răspunse Eppie. Daca n-ai fi fost tu, aș fi fost dusă la azilul săracilor și acolo nu m-ar fi iubit nimeni.

—Ei, scumpul meu copil, eu am fost cel binecuvântat. Dacă nu mi-ai fi fost trimisă ca să mă salvezi, suferința m-ar fi doborât. Banii mi-au fost luați la timpul potrivit; au fost păstrați până când ai avut tu nevoie de ei. E minunat, viața noastră este minunată. Silas tăcu câteva minute privind banii. Acum ei nu mai au nici o

life is wonderful.'

Silas sat in silence a few minutes, looking at the money. 'It takes no hold of me now,' he said, ponderingly—the money doesn't. I wonder if it ever could again—I doubt it might, if I lost you, Eppie. I might come to think I was forsaken again, and lose the feeling that God was good to me.'

(in *Silas Marner* 192-4)

putere asupra mea, rosti el apăsat. Mă-ntreb dacă ar mai avea vreodată; mă-ndoiesc. Dacă te-aș pierde, Eppie, s-ar putea să cred că sunt din nou părăsit și aș pierde credința că Dumnezeu este bun cu mine.

[Traducere de Mihai Rădulescu, Editura pentru Literatură Universală, București, 1969]

From *Middlemarch*

Middlemarch is considered to be one of the greatest of English novels, a novel of exploration of moral situations and discovery, of social networking and interaction. George Eliot's social network is a complex and dynamic one materialised in a local, rural community that does not in the least offer an idyllic image or anything nostalgic (Neale 55). What the novel offers its readers is in fact not only a 'study of provincial life'—as its subtitle says—restricted to a certain territory, but also an epitome of early nineteenth century England in which practically every class and quite a lot of professions of Middlemarch society are depicted—including representatives of middle classes, bourgeoisie and aristocracy, landed gentry and clergy, manufacturers, shopkeepers, publicans, farmers and labourers. Such people are distributed into several threads of plot cleverly interwoven to contrast or run in parallel as the novel's multitude of characters, about 50 in number, interrelate with each other and cross these plots in and out. These interrelations are facilitated by the fact that the network is a closed one, formed within a small community where people know each other.

Paramount for such a complex construction is the novel's unity and cohesiveness, skilfully achieved by George Eliot's authorial governance not only of the novel but also of its readers (Neale 55). Her omniscience dominates, supervises and keeps everything under control.

Miss Brooke

Dorothea Brooke lies at the core of all relations in the whole novel. She is one of the noblest characters in literature with her innocence, purity and inborn goodness that make the other characters better and more honourable than they are. What makes her noble is, first of all, her trust in her old husband, then her pity and sense of duty and, later on, her sincere love for Will Ladislaw, for whose sake she gives up her prospects of

*inheritance. The text below, extracted from Chapter 1, is her physical, moral and intellectual portrait as a version of *Saint Theresa, a portrait which Eliot represents with obvious sympathy.*

Miss Brooke had that kind of beauty which seems to be thrown into relief by poor dress. Her hand and wrist were so finely formed that she could wear sleeves not less bare of style than those in which the Blessed Virgin appeared to Italian painters; and her profile as well as her stature and bearing seemed to gain the more dignity from her plain garments, which by the side of provincial fashion gave her the impressiveness of a fine quotation from the Bible,—or from one of our elder poets,—in a paragraph of to-day's newspaper. She was usually spoken of as being remarkably clever, but with the addition that her sister Celia had more common-sense. Nevertheless, Celia wore scarcely more trimmings; and it was only to close observers that her dress differed from her sister's, and had a shade of coquetry in its arrangements; for Miss Brooke's plain dressing was due to mixed conditions, in most of which her sister shared. […] Dorothea knew many passages of *Pascal's *Pensees* and of Jeremy *Taylor by heart; and to her the destinies of mankind, seen by the light of Christianity, made the solicitudes of feminine fashion appear an occupation for *Bedlam. She could not reconcile the anxieties of a spiritual life involving eternal consequences, with a keen interest in *guimp

Domnișoara Brooke era înzestrată cu acel soi de frumusețe pe care veșmintele austere par să o pună în valoare. Mâna și încheietura ei erau atât de fin modelate, încât putea să poarte mâneci fără stil, la fel ca Binecuvântata Fecioară în viziunea pictorilor italieni; iar profilul, ca și statura și portu-i, păreau a dobândi și mai multă demnitate, datorită veșmintelor simple: prin croiala lor provincială, acestea îi dăruiau caracterul impresionant al unui frumos citat din Biblie sau din opera vreunui poet de odinioară, picat în mijlocul unui paragraf dintr-un ziar de astăzi. De obicei se spunea despre ea că ar vădi o inteligență remarcabilă, dar se adăuga ca soră-sa, Celia, știa să se chibzuiască mai bine. Cu toate acestea, rochiile Celiei nu erau mult mai garnisite și numai cine-i studia pe-ndelete toaleta găsea că se deosebea prin ceva de cea a soră-si și remarca o umbră de cochetărie în amănuntele ce o alcătuiau; fiindcă domnișoara Brooke se îmbrăca simplu, din motive pe care, de cele mai multe ori, le împărtășea și sora ei. Mândria lor de doamne nu era străină de aceste motive; relațiile familiei Brooke, deși nu tocmai aristocratice, treceau, fără discuție, drept „bune;" dacă cercetai trecutul lor, cu două-trei generații în urmă, nu ai fi găsit vreun străbun care să măsoare marfa cu cotul sau să lege pachete—

and artificial *protrusions of drapery. Her mind was theoretic, and yearned by its nature after some lofty conception of the world which might frankly include the parish of Tipton and her own rule of conduct there; she was enamoured of intensity and greatness, and rash in embracing whatever seemed to her to have those aspects; likely to seek martyrdom, to make retractations, and then to *incur martyrdom after all in a quarter where she had not sought it. […].

[…] Those who approached Dorothea, though prejudiced against her by this alarming hearsay, found that she had a charm unaccountably reconcilable with it. Most men thought her bewitching when she was on horseback. She loved the fresh air and the various aspects of the country, and when her eyes and cheeks glowed with mingled pleasure she looked very little like a devotee. Riding was an indulgence which she allowed herself in spite of conscientious qualms; she felt that she enjoyed it in a pagan sensuous way, and always looked forward to renouncing it.

She was open, ardent, and not in the least self-admiring; indeed, it was pretty to see her how her imagination adorned her sister Celia with attraction altogether superior to her own, and if any gentleman approached to come to the Grange her home from some other motive than that of seeing Mr Brooke her uncle, she concluded that he must be in love with Celia. […]

niciunul măcar mai prejos de un amiral, sau un prelat; ba mai întâlneai chiar și un strămoș care putea fi identificat drept un gentilom puritan: acesta slujise sub comanda lui Cromwell, dar după aceea se plecase în fața autorității bisericii anglicane și izbutise să iasă cu fața curată din toate încurcăturile politice, dat fiind că era proprietar al unei moșii respectabile. Era firesc ca două tinere cu o asemenea obârșie, care trăiau într-un tihnit conac de țară și se duceau la slujba religioasă într-o bisericuță sătească ceva mai încăpătoare decât un salon, să considere că zorzoanele sunt o ambiție demnă de o fiică de boccengiu. O altă pricină era și cumpătarea, izvorâtă din buna-creștere; în vremurile acelea ea făcea ca îmbrăcămintea bătătoare la ochi să fie primul articol la care urma să renunțe, când se cerea restrângerea cheltuielilor menite să sublinieze deosebirea de rang. Aceste temeiuri ar fi fost de ajuns pentru a explica îmbrăcămintea lor modestă, fără să mai fie nevoie să ne referim și la simțămintele lor evlavioase; dar, în cazul domnișoarei Brooke, religia ar fi putut să fie și singura cauză; în ce o privește pe Celia, ea încuviința cu blândețe toate vederile surorii sale, atâta doar că le modela cu acel simț capabil să accepte dogmele fundamentale, fără să le dispute cu prea multă înverșunare. Dorotea știa pe de rost numeroase pasaje din *Pensees* de Pascal și din opera lui Jeremy Taylor[1]; pentru dânsa, destinul omenirii, privit în lumina ideilor creștine, făcea ca ispitele modei feminine

Dorothea, with all her eagerness to know the truths of life, retained very childlike ideas about marriage. She felt sure that she would have accepted the judicious *Hooker, if she had been born in time to save him from that wretched marriage he made in matrimony; or John Milton when his blindness had come on; or any other great men whose odd habits it would have been glorious piety to endure. […] The really delightful marriage must be that where your husband was a sort of father, and could teach you even Hebrew, if you wished it.

(in *Middlemarch* 1-2)

să apară o ocupație vrednică de Bedlam[2]. Nu putea să împace frământările unei vieți spirituale, menită să aibă urmări veșnice, cu un interes profund pentru o ghipură și pentru faldurile artificiale ale unei toalete drapate. Firea ei înclina spre o gândire teoretică și o îndemna să năzuiască spre o înaltă concepție asupra universului, care să poată include în mod deschis parohia Tipton și rolul fruntaș deținut de ea acolo. Ardoarea și măreția o fascinau și se grăbea să îmbrățișeze tot ceea ce i se părea că îmbracă aceste aspecte; o atrăgea martiriul, era gata să-și îngăduie unele libertăți pentru care apoi să se lase crucificată, chiar și acolo unde nu urmărise acest țel de la bun început. [...]

Totuși, cei care trăiau în preajma Doroteei, deși erau înrâuriți de aceste zvonuri alarmante, descopereau că aveau un farmec al ei și că acesta se potrivea în chip inexplicabil cu tot ceea ce se spunea despre ea. Majoritatea bărbaților o socoteau fascinantă, când o zăreau călărind. Doroteei îi plăceau aerul curat și priveliștile variate ale ținutului, iar când ochii și obrajii îi străluceau de fiorul unor plăceri nedefinite, înfățișarea ei era departe de a fi cucernică. Călăria era o desfătare pe care și-o îngăduia, în pofida scrupulelor de conștiință; simțea că se bucură într-un fel senzual, păgân, de plimbările călare și mereu își punea în gând să renunțe la ele.

Avea o fire deschisă, aprigă, și nu-și admira câtuși de puțin însușirile; era într-adevăr frumos, să vezi cum închipuirea ei o

împodobea pe Celia cu farmece care le întreceau cu mult pe-ale ei; iar dacă se nimerea ca vreun gentilom să vină pe la conacul Grange, adus de altceva decât de dorința de a-l vizita pe domnul Brooke, Dorotea își spunea că trebuia să fie îndrăgostit de Celia.

De pildă, *Sir* Chettam, pe care-l judeca totdeauna din punctul de vedere al Celiei, cumpănind în sinea ei dacă ar fi sau nu cuminte ca soră-sa să-l accepte ca soț. Ideea că ar fi putut să fie privit ca pețitorul ei i s-ar fi părut ridicolă. Cu toată dorința ei de a cunoaște adevărurile vieții, Dorotea nutrea idei foarte copilărești despre căsnicie. Era încredințată că i-ar fi acordat mâna ei înțeleptului Hooper, dacă s-ar fi născut la vreme pentru a-l izbăvi de nenorocita greșeală pe care o săvârșise în alegerea tovarășei sale de viață; sau l-ar fi luat de soț pe John Milton, de îndată ce și-a pierdut lumina ochilor; sau pe oricare altul dintre oamenii mari ale căror apucături bizare nu pot fi îndurate decât dacă ești înarmat cu o doză de glorioasă cucernicie.

Dar cum ar fi putut să se simtă mișcată când îi făcea curte un amabil și chipeș baronet, care răspundea „Exact" la tot ce spunea ea, chiar atunci când își arăta îndoiala? O căsnicie cu adevărat încântătoare trebuia, neapărat, să fie aceea în care soțul îți era un fel de părinte, capabil să te învețe și ebraica, dacă doreai.

[Traducere de Eugen B. Marian, colecția Biblioteca pentru toți, Editura Minerva, 1977]

A Husband with Judgement and Knowledge

Everybody expects Dorothea to marry the good-looking, rich and young Sir James Chettam but the man she wants for a husband is the pedant and elderly Mr Casaubon, in whom she sees the person able to offer her the possibility to have access to culture and widen thus her intellectual horizon – two necessary steps which, in her opinion, she has to climb on her way to emancipation.

The text below, a dialogue between Dorothea and Mr Brooke her uncle, states her reasons for accepting such a surprising marriage.

[…] 'Casaubon has asked my permission to make you an offer of marriage—of marriage, you know,' said Mr Brooke, with his explanatory nod. 'I thought it better to tell you, my dear.'

No one could have detected any anxiety in Mr Brooke's manner, but he could really wish to know something of his niece's mind, that, if there were any need for advice, he might give it in time. What feeling he, as a magistrate who had taken in so many ideas, could make room for, was unmixedly kind. Since Dorothea did not speak immediately, he repeated, 'I thought it better to tell you, my dear.'

'Thank you, uncle,' said Dorothea, in a clear unwavering tone. 'I am very grateful to Mr Casaubon. If he makes me an offer, I shall accept him. I admire and honour him more than any man I ever saw.'

Mr Brooke paused a little, and then said in a lingering low tone, 'Ah? […] Well! He is a good match in some respects. But

Oricum, în două cuvinte, mi-a cerut voie să-ți propună să fii soția lui—soție, știi—zise domnul Brooke, clătinând din cap în semn de explicație. Am socotit mai nimerit să-ți spun, draga mea.

Nimeni nu ar fi putut să descopere vreo notă de îngrijorare în vocea domnului Brooke, dar dorea sincer să afle cam care erau intențiile nepoatei sale, astfel încât, dacă ar fi avut nevoie de vreun sfat, să i-l poată da la timpul potrivit. Simțămintele pe care le putea încerca el, în calitate de magistrat care văzuse și auzise atâtea, erau cu totul și cu totul blajine. Deoarece Dorotea nu se pronunța imediat, repetă:

—Am socotit mai nimerit să-ți spun, draga mea.

—Îți mulțumesc, unchiule, rosti Dorotea cu glas limpede și neșovăielnic. Îi sunt foarte recunoscătoare domnului Casaubon. Dacă îmi va cere oficial mâna, voi accepta. Îl admir și îl stimez mai mult decât pe oricare alt bărbat pe care-l cunosc.

Domnul Brooke făcu o mică pauză și apoi rosti cu voce scăzută

now Chettam is a good match.' And our land lies together. I shall never interfere against your wishes, my dear. People should have their own marriage, and that sort of thing—up to a certain point, you know. I have always said that, up to a certain point. I wish you to marry well; and I have good reasons to believe that Chettam wishes to marry you. I mention it, you know.'

'It is impossible that I should ever marry Sir James Chettam,' said Dorothea. 'If he thinks of marrying me, he has made a great mistake.'

'That is it, you see. One never knows. I should have thought Chettam was just that sort of man a woman would like, now.'

'Pray, do not mention him in that light again, uncle.' said Dorothea, feeling some of her late irritation revive.

Mr Brooke wondered, and felt that women were an inexhaustible subject of study, since even he at his age was not in a perfect state of scientific prediction about them! Here was a fellow like Chettam with no chance at all.

'Well, but Casaubon, now. There is no hurry—I mean for you. It is true, every year will tell upon him. He is over *five-and-forty, you know. I should say a good *seven-and-twenty years older than you. To be sure,—if you like learning and standing, and that sort of thing, we can't have everything. And his income is good—he has a handsome property independent

și tărăgănată.

—Aa? Binee! E o partidă bună, în anumite privințe. Dar, ce mai, și Chettam este o partidă bună. Pământurile noastre se învecinează. Nu o să mă împotrivesc niciodată dorințelor tale, scumpa mea, când e vorba de căsătorie și alte asemenea lucruri. Oamenii trebuie să procedeze după cum îi taie capul, dar până la un anumit punct, știi. Asta am spus întotdeauna: până la un anumit punct. Doresc să faci un mariaj bun, și am motive serioase să cred ca Chettam vrea să te ia de nevastă. Îți menționez și amănuntul ăsta.

—Ar fi cu neputință să mă mărit vreodată cu *Sir* James Chettam, rosti Dorotea. Dacă se gândește să se însoare cu mine, face o mare greșeală.

—Asta este, vezi. Nu poți ști niciodată. Uite, eu unul aș fi crezut că Chettam este tocmai genul de bărbat menit să câștige simpatia unei femei.

—Te rog să nu-mi pomenești de el în această calitate, unchiule, spuse Dorotea, simțind că începe să-și iasă din nou din fire.

Domnul Brooke se miră și simți că femeile alcătuiesc un nesecat subiect de studiu, de vreme ce nici măcar la vârsta lui nu putea să prevadă felul cum vor primi un anumit lucru. Poftim, un ins ca Chettam, și să n-aibă nici o șansă!

—Bine, și acum să vorbim de Casaubon. Nu-i nici o grabă—vreau să spun, din partea ta. E adevărat, fiecare an care se adaugă se va cunoaște pe figura lui. A trecut de patruzeci și cinci de ani, știi.

of the Church—his income is good. Still he is not young, and I must not conceal from you, my dear, that I think his health is not over-strong. I know nothing else against him.'

'I should not wish to have a husband very near my own age.' said Dorothea, with grave decision. 'I should wish to have a husband who was above me in judgement and in all knowledge.'

Mr Brooke repeated his subdued, 'Ah?—I thought you liked your own opinion—liked it, you know.'

'I cannot imagine myself living without some opinions, but I should wish to have good reasons for them, and a wise man could help me to see which opinions had the best foundation, and would help me to live according to them.'

'Very true. You couldn't put the thing better—couldn't put it better, beforehand, you know. But there are oddities in things,' continued Mr Brooke, whose conscience was really roused to do the best he could for his niece on this occasion. 'Life isn't cast in a mould—not cut out by rule and line, and that sort of thing. I never married myself, and it will be the better for you and yours. The fact is, I never loved any one well enough to put myself into a *noose for them. It *is* a noose, you know. Temper now. There is temper. And a husband likes to be master.'

'I know that I must expect trials, uncle. Marriage is a state

Aş zice că este cu douăzeci şi şapte de ani mai bătrân decât tine. Negreşit—dacă ţii la învăţătura, la poziţie socială, şi la soiul ăsta de lucruri...de, omul nu le poate avea pe toate. Şi are un venit bun, are o proprietate frumuşică, independentă de Biserică—da, venitul lui e bun. Totuşi, nu mai e tânăr şi nu trebuie să-ţi ascund, scumpa mea, eu cred că n-are chiar o sănătate de fier. Altceva care să fie împotriva lui nu ştiu.

—Nu aş vrea să am un soţ de aceeaşi vârstă cu mine—răspunse Dorotea, cu o gravă hotărâre în glas. Îmi doresc un soţ care să fie mai presus de mine în privinţa judecăţii şi a tuturor cunoştinţelor posibile.

Domnul Brooke repetă blânda lui exclamaţie:

—Aaa! [...]

Chettam este un băiat bun, un om inimos, ştii; dar nu face mare ispravă pe tărâmul ideilor. Eu mă dădeam în vânt după ele, la vârsta lui. Dar mai e şi vederea lui Casaubon. Cred că şi-a cam stricat ochii, de prea mult citit.

—Voi fi cu atât mai fericită, unchiule, cu cât voi avea mai multe prilejuri de a-l ajuta, rosti cu înflăcărare Dorotea.

—Văd că hotărârea ta e luată. Bine, draga mea, fapt este că am în buzunar o scrisoare pentru tine. Domnul Brooke înmână Doroteei scrisoarea, dar când fata se ridică să plece, adăugă: Nu e nici un zor, scumpa mea. Mai chibzuieşte la alegerea asta, ştii.

După ce Dorotea ieşi, domnul Brooke reflectă că, fără îndoială,

of higher duties. I never thought of it as mere personal ease,' said poor Dorothea.

'Well, you are not fond of show, a great establishment, balls, dinners, that kind of thing. I can see that Casaubon's ways might suit you better than Chettam's. And you shall do as you like, my dear. I would not hinder Casaubon; I said so at once; for there is no knowing how anything may turn out. You have not the same tastes as every young lady; and a clergyman and scholar—who may be a bishop—that kind of thing—may suit you better than Chettam. Chettam is a good fellow, a good sound-hearted fellow, you know; but he doesn't go much into ideas. I did, when I was his age. But Casaubon's eyes now. I think he has hurt them a little with too much reading.'

'I should be all the happier, uncle, the more room there was for me to help him,' said Dorothea, ardently.

'You have quite made up your mind, I see. Well, my dear, the fact is, I have a letter for you in my pocket.' Mr Brooke handed the letter to Dorothea, bust as she rose to go away, he added, 'There is not too much hurry, my dear. Think about it, you know.'

When Dorothea had left him, he reflected that he had certainly spoken strongly: he had put the risks of marriage before her in a striking manner. It was his duty to do so. But as to pretending to be wise for young people,—no uncle, however

vorbise răspicat: îi înfățișase riscurile căsniciei într-un mod impresionant. Asta era datoria lui. Cât privește pretenția de a fi înțelept în locul tinerilor, nici un soi de unchi, oricât de mult ar fi călătorit în tinerețea lui, oricât s-ar fi pătruns el de ideile noi și ar fi cinat cu celebrități azi răposate, nu putea să decidă ce fel de căsnicie avea să fie mai fericită pentru o fată care prefera să se mărite cu Casaubon și nu cu Chettam. Pe scurt, femeia reprezenta o problema care, întrucât mintea domnului Brooke nu o putea rezolva cu nici un chip, nu putea fi mai puțin complicată decât mișcarea de revoluție a unui corp solid de formă neregulată.

[Traducere de Eugen B. Marian, colecția Biblioteca pentru toți, Editura Minerva, 1977]

much he had travelled in his youth, absorbed the new ideas, and dined with celebrities now deceased, could pretend to judge what sort of marriage would turn out well for a young girl who preferred Casaubon to Chettam. In short, woman was a problem which, since Mr Brooke's mind felt blank before it, could be hardly less complicated than the revolutions of an irregular solid.'

(in *Middlemarch* 36-9)

The Lamp of Knowledge

As seen from the previous text extract, Dorothea's reason for getting married to Casaubon, in spite of the difference in age between them, is her hope that he would offer her intellectual nourishment and cultivation and the prospect for emancipation and assertion as a woman in a period when all knowledge that young ladies were offered could be enclosed in a 'toy box'. Mr Casaubon himself would like a companion to act as a personal secretary and enliven the loneliness and weariness of his study hours. Marriage for him is a mere duty he has to fulfil just as he has to find a secretary, as Neale underlines (101). It is not surprising that, incapable as he is to abandon his egoism, he cannot accept the individuality of Dorothea and, accordingly, will consider her suitable but for the vacant place of personal secretary.

The passage reproduced below reasserts the two future spouses' matrimonial reasons in a convincing display of George Eliot's omniscience.

Poor Mr. Casaubon had imagined that his long studious bachelorhood had stored up for him a compound interest of enjoyment, and that large drafts on his affections would not fail to be honoured; for we all of us, grave or light, get our thoughts entangled in metaphors, and act fatally on the strength of them. And now he was in danger of being saddened by the very conviction that his circumstances were unusually happy: there was nothing external by which he could account for a certain blankness of sensibility which came over him just when his expectant gladness should have been most lively, just when he exchanged the accustomed dullness of his Lowick library for his visits to the Grange. Here was a weary experience in which he was as utterly condemned to loneliness as in the despair which

Sărmanul domn Casaubon își imaginase că îndelungata și studioasa lui burlăcie înmagazinase pentru el o dobândă compusă la capitolul bucuriei, și că polițele serioase trase asupra afecțiunii sale nu vor întârzia să fie onorate; deoarece noi cu toții, fie că suntem gravi sau ușuratici, ne încâlcim gândurile în metafore și acționăm, în mod fatal, pe temeiul lor. Iar acum simțea primejdia de a se întrista, fiindcă era convins că împrejurările se arătau neobișnuit de fericite pentru el: nu exista nici un factor din afară în măsură să justifice o anumită apatie a simțurilor, care îl năpădea tocmai acum, când bucuria lui plină de așteptare s-ar fi cuvenit să fie mai vie, tocmai acum când înlocuise obișnuitul plictis al bibliotecii sale din Lowick, cu vizitele la Grange. Totul alcătuia o experiență ostenită; era

sometimes threatened him while toiling in the *morass of authorship without seeming nearer to the goal. And his was that worst loneliness which would *shrink from sympathy. He could not but wish that Dorothea should think him not less happy than the world would expect her successful suitor to be; and in relation to his authorship he leaned on her young trust and veneration, he liked to draw forth her fresh interest in listening, as a means of encouragement to himself: in talking to her he presented all his performance and intention with the reflected confidence of the pedagogue, and rid himself for the time of that chilling ideal audience which crowded his laborious uncreative hours with the vaporous pressure of *Tartarean shades.

For to Dorothea, after that toy-box history of the world adapted to young ladies which had made the chief part of her education, Mr. Casaubon's talk about his great book was full of new vistas; and this sense of revelation, this surprise of a nearer introduction to *Stoics and *Alexandrians, as people who had ideas not totally unlike her own, kept *in abeyance for the time her usual eagerness for a binding theory which could bring her own life and doctrine into strict connection with that amazing past, and give the remotest sources of knowledge some bearing on her actions. That more complete teaching would come—Mr. Casaubon would tell her all that: she was looking forward to higher initiation in ideas, as she was looking forward to

condamnat fără nădejde la singurătate, la fel ca și în disperarea ce-l amenința uneori când se zbătea în mâlul autorilor iluștri, și nu părea să se apropie de țel. Iar singurătatea lui era din cele mai rele, soiul care evită compasiunea. Își dorea să nu apară în ochii Doroteei mai puțin fericit decât se aștepta lumea să fie pretendentul care-i obținuse mâna; iar în ceea ce privește situația lui de autor, se bizuia pe tânăra ei încredere și venerație; îi plăcea să scoată la suprafață interesul proaspăt cu care ea îl asculta, ceea ce pentru dânsul era un imbold; când discuta cu logodnica lui, îi prezenta toate împlinirile și intențiile sale, cu încrederea cumpănită a pedagogului, și scăpa pentru o vreme de nălucirile lui: acel public imaginar, care-l îngheța în orele lui de trudă sterilă, când simțea parcă apăsarea aeriană a umbrelor infernului.

Căci pentru Dorotea, după acea istorie de operetă a lumii, adaptată pentru tinerele fete, care alcătuia partea de căpetenie a ceea ce învățase ea, perorațiile domnului Casaubon despre marea lui carte erau pline de vederi noi; iar senzația revelației, surpriza pe care-o încerca atunci când îl cunoștea mai îndeaproape pe stoici și pe alexandrieni, ca pe niște oameni cu idei nu chiar total deosebite de ale ei, îi țineau pentru moment în frâu obișnuita-i dorință arzătoare de a găsi o teorie convingătoare în stare să stabilească o legătură între viața și crezurile ei și acel uluitor trecut și să dovedească faptul că până

marriage, and blending her dim conceptions of both. It would be a great mistake to suppose that Dorothea would have cared about any share in Mr. Casaubon's learning as mere accomplishment; for though opinion in the neighbourhood of Freshitt and Tipton had pronounced her clever, that epithet would not have described her to circles in whose more precise vocabulary cleverness implies mere aptitude for knowing and doing, apart from character. All her eagerness for acquirement lay within that full current of sympathetic motive in which her ideas and impulses were habitually swept along. She did not want to deck herself with knowledge—to wear it loose from the nerves and blood that fed her action; and if she had written a book she must have done it as Saint Theresa did, under the command of an authority that constrained her conscience. But something she yearned for by which her life might be filled with action at once rational and ardent; and since the time was gone by for guiding visions and spiritual directors, since prayer heightened yearning but not instruction, what lamp was there but knowledge?

(in *Middlemarch* 79-80)

și cele mai îndepărtate surse de cunoaștere aveau oarecare influență asupra acțiunilor ei. Această învățătură mai temeinică avea să vină, și domnul Casaubon urma să-i facă cunoscute toate acestea; anticipa o inițiere mai elevată în lumea ideilor, la fel cum aștepta căsătoria, și cele două fenomene alcătuiau împreună un tot neclar. Ar fi o mare greșeală să presupunem că Dorotea ar fi dorit să împărtășească activ erudiția domnului Casaubon, privind acest lucru ca pe o mare înfăptuire căci, deși părerile care circulau prin împrejurimile domeniilor Freshitt și Tipton o proclamaseră deșteaptă, acest epitet nu ar fi caracterizat-o în cercurile unde, într-un vocabular mai precis, deșteptăciune înseamnă doar aptitudinea de a cunoaște și a acționa, aptitudine independentă de afectivitate. Tot zelul ei înfocat de a dobândi cunoștințe își avea originea în acel năvalnic șuvoi afectiv în care erau de obicei târâte ideile și impulsurile ei. Nu dorea să adune cunoștințe—să le păstreze în mintea ei, despuiate de nervul și pasiunea ce-i hrăneau acțiunile—iar dacă ar fi scris o carte, pesemne că ar fi făcut-o ca și sfânta Tereza, sub impulsul unei forțe care i-ar fi constrâns conștiința. Dar năzuia la ceva prin care viața ei să poată fi întregită de acțiuni raționale și arzătoare totodată; și, de vreme ce epoca viziunilor călăuzitoare și a îndrumătorilor spirituali trecuse, iar rugăciunile intensifică aspirațiile dar nu și instrucțiunea, ce altă sursă de lumină, ce altă lampă mai exista, afară de cunoaștere? Cu siguranță că oamenii

învăţaţi păstrau cu grijă singurul ulei de lampă bun; și cine era mai învățat decât domnul Casaubon?

[Traducere de Eugen B. Marian, colecția Biblioteca pentru toți, Editura Minerva, 1977]

Marriage and Money

An institution intensely represented in the novel is that of marriage. With two exceptions (that of Celia Brooke, Dorothea's sister, to Sir James Chettam and Mary Garth's marriage to Fred Vincy, a young man who loved her from his youth), all marriages in the novel are unhappy. One of such unhappy marital couples is that of Dr Lydgate with Rosamond Vincy. Dr Tertius Lydgate is another important character in the novel. He is one of the local doctors, an ambitious but often unpractical man in love with his profession and with passion for scientific discovery. Rosamond Vincy is the ambitious but narrow-minded and egoistic daughter of the local Mayor. But, as Jedrzejewski remarks (74), her egoism has nothing malicious in it, it is a mere whim, the direct result of her moral ignorance and abdication from matters of responsibility.

The scene following below records a conflicting discussion that the two have. The cause of conflict is a very common one – the recurrent problem of money. Because things did not go on too well for him, Dr. Tertius Lydgate has run into financial problems which he is trying to explain to his wife, Rosamond. But the only thing he gets from her is reproaches and self-pitying tears.

'I am obliged to tell you what will hurt you, Rosy. But there are things which husband and wife must think of, together. I daresay it has occurred to you already that I am short of money.'

Lydgate paused; but Rosamond turned her neck and looked at a vase on the mantelpiece.

'I was not able to pay for all the things we had to get before we were married, and there have been expenses since which I have been obliged to meet. The consequence is, there is a large debt at Brassing—three hundred and eighty pounds—which has been pressing me a good while, and in fact we are getting deeper every day, for people don't pay me the faster because others

—Sunt obligat să-ți spun ceva care o să te doară, Rosy. Dar există unele lucruri pe care un soț şi o soție trebuie să le chibzuiască împreună. Nu mă îndoiesc că ți-a şi trecut prin minte că sunt strâmtorat din punct de vedere bănesc.

Lydgate făcu o pauză; dar Rosamunda îşi întoarse capul şi se uită la o vază de pe cămin.

—Nu am fost în stare să plătesc toate lucrurile pe care le-am luat înainte de ne-am căsătorit, şi de atunci s-au mai ivit alte cheltuieli cărora am fost silit să le fac față. Ca urmare, datorez o sumă însemnată la Brassing—trei sute optzeci de lire—pentru care sunt presat de o bucată de vreme şi, de fapt, mă înfund tot

want the money. I took pains to keep it from you while you were not well; but now we must think together about it, and you must help me.'

'What can *I* do, Tertius?' said Rosamond, turning her eyes on him again. That little speech of four words […] fell like a mortal chill on Lydgate's roused tenderness. He did not storm in indignation—he felt too sad a sinking of the heart. And when he spoke again it was more in the tone of a man who forces himself to fulfil a task.

'It is necessary for you to know, because I have to give *security for a time, and a man must come to make an inventory of the furniture.'

Rosamond coloured deeply. 'Have you not asked papa for money?' she said, as soon as she could speak.

'No.'

'Then I must ask him!' she said, releasing her hands from Lydgate's, and rising to stand at two yards' distance from him.

'No, Rosy,' said Lydgate, decisively. 'It is too late to do that. The inventory will be begun to-morrow. Remember it is a mere security: it will make no difference: it is a temporary affair. I insist upon it, that your father shall not know, unless I choose to tell him,' added Lydgate with a more *peremptory emphasis.

This was unkind, but Rosamond had thrown him back on evil expectation as to what she would do in the way of quiet

mai adânc, zi de zi, deoarece pacienții mei nu-mi plătesc mai urgent numai din cauză că alții îşi pretind şi ei banii cuveniți. M-a costat destul zbucium ca să-ți ascund situația, câtă vreme nu te-ai simțit bine; dar acum trebuie să chibzuim împreună şi tu trebuie să mă ajuți.

—Ce pot face *eu*, Tertius? întrebă Rosamunda, întorcându-şi iarăşi ochii asupra lui.

Fraza aceea mică, compusă din cinci cuvinte, asemănătoare cu multe altele din toate limbile, e capabilă, prin mijlocirea unor variate inflexiuni vocale, să exprime toate stările sufleteşti, de la o insensibilitate deznădăjduită până la o înțelegere atotcuprinzătoare, de la solidaritate plină de abnegație, până la cea mai neutră distanțare. Pronunțarea subțiratică a Rosamundei aruncase în cuvintele: „Ce pot face *eu*" toată cantitatea de neutraliatate pe care acestea o pot cuprinde. Căzură ca un îngheț mortal peste tandrețea redeşteptată în sufletul lui Lydgate. Nu izbucni într-o furtună de indignare—simțea o strângere de inimă prea dureroasă. Şi când vorbi din nou, folosi mai degrabă tonul unui om care se sileşte să-şi ducă la îndeplinire o sarcină neplăcută.

—E necesar să ştii şi tu cum stăm, fiindcă mă văd constrâns să ofer o garanție pentru un răstimp, şi va trebui să vină un om să facă inventarul mobilierului.

Rosamunda roşi toată.

steady disobedience. The unkindness seemed unpardonable to her: she was not given to weeping and disliked it, but now her chin and lips began to tremble and the tears welled up. […] [Lydgate] did wish to spare her as much as he could, and her tears cut him to the heart. He could not speak again immediately; but Rosamond did not go on sobbing: she tried to conquer her agitation and wiped away her tears, continuing to look before her at the mantelpiece.

'Try not to grieve, darling,' said Lydgate, turning his eyes up towards her. That she had chosen to move away from him in this terrible moment of her trouble made everything harder to say, but he must absolutely go on. 'We must *brace ourselves to do what is necessary. It is I who have been at fault: I ought to have seen that I could not afford to live in this way. But many things have been told against me in my practice, and it really just now has *ebbed to a low point. I may recover it, but in the meantime we must pull up—we must change our way of living. We shall *weather it. When I have given this security I shall have time to look about me; and you are so clever that if you turn your mind to managing you will school me into carefulness. I have been a thoughtless rascal about *squaring prices—but come, dear, sit down and forgive me.'

Lydgate was bowing his neck under the yoke like a creature who had *talons, but who had Reason too, which often reduces

—Nu i-ai cerut tatii bani? întrebă ea, de-ndată ce fu în stare să scoată o vorbă.

—Nu.

—Atunci trebuie să-i cer eu! conchise, eliberându-şi mâinile din strânsoarea lui Lydgate şi ridicându-se, ca să rămână în picioare la doi paşi de el.

—Nu, Rosy, ripostă Lydgate, pe un ton categoric. E prea târziu ca să mai facem asta. Inventarul va începe mâine. Ține minte că este vorba de o simplă garanție; pentru noi nu va însemna nici o deosebire, e doar o treabă temporară. Insist ca tatăl tău să nu afle, decât dacă mă hotărăsc eu să-i spun, adăugă Lydgate, subliniind răspicat cuvintele.

Desigur că era o precizare lipsită de amabilitate, dar Rosamunda îi stârnise îndoieli nefaste cu privire la purtarea pe care avea s-o adopte în îndărătnica şi tăcuta ei nesupunere. Răutatea lui i se păru de neiertat: nu plângea uşor şi detesta plânsul, dar în clipa aceea începură să-i tremure buzele şi bărbia, şi lacrimile izvorâră. Poate că Lydgate, sub dubla presiune a unor dificultăți materiale exterioare şi a orgolioasei sale rezistențe personale față de urmări umilitoare, nu avea putința să-şi imagineze în amănunt ce însemna acea încercare subită pentru o tânără făptură, care nu cunoscuse altceva decât îngăduința, şi ale cărei vise tindeau către noi îngăduințe, şi mai exact adaptate gusturilor ei. Dar dorea sincer să o cruțe cât mai

us to meekness. When he had spoken the last words in an imploring tone, Rosamond returned to the chair by his side. His self-blame gave her some hope that he would attend to her opinion and said—

'Why can you not put off having the inventory made? You can send the men sway to-morrow when they come.'

'I shall not send them away,' said Lydgate, the peremptoriness rising again. Was it of any use to explain?

'If we left Middlemarch, there would of course be a sale, and that would do as well.'

'But we are not going to leave Middlemarch.'

'I am sure, Tertius, it would be much better to do so. Why can we not go to London? Or near Durham, where your family is known?'

'We can go nowhere without money, Rosamond.'

'Your friends would not wish you to be without money. And surely these odious tradesmen might be made to understand that, and to wait, if you would make proper representations to them.'

'This is *idle, Rosamond,' said Lydgate, angrily. 'You must learn to take my judgement on questions you don't understand. I have made necessary arrangements, and they must be carried out. As to friends, I have no expectations whatever from them, and shall not ask them for anything.'

mult, şi lacrimile Rosamundei îi sângerară inima. Nu fu în stare să-şi continue imediat vorbele: Rosamunda însă încetă să suspine: căută să-şi stăpânească agitația şi-şi şterse lacrimile, pironindu-şi privirea drept înainte, spre cămin.

—Încearcă să nu te mâhneşti, scumpa mea, o potoli Lydgate, înălțându-şi privirea spre ea.

Faptul că Rosamunda alesese să stea la distanță în clipa aceea de frământare, făcea ca totul să fie mai greu de spus, dar trebuia neapărat să meargă mai departe.

—Trebuie să ne încordăm forțele şi să facem ceea ce este necesar. Eu port vina: s-ar fi cuvenit să văd că nu-mi pot permite să trăiesc la nivelul acesta. Dar multe lucruri s-au întors împotriva mea în practica profesională şi, într-adevăr, tocmai în perioada aceasta clientela mi s-a rărit serios. Voi putea să-mi recapăt pacienții, dar deocamdată trebuie să înfruntăm situația—trebuie să ne schimbăm felul de viață. O să răzbim şi prin încercarea asta. După ce voi fi oferit această garanție, voi avea timp să privesc în jurul meu; şi tu eşti atât de deşteaptă încât, dacă-ți îndrepți mintea spre gospodărirea casei, îmi vei da lecții cum să fiu grijuliu. Am fost un nesăbuit în ce priveşte posibilitățile de economie, dar haide, scumpa mea, stai jos şi iartă-mă.

Lydgate îşi încovoia capul sub jug, ca o ființă înzestrată cu copite dar şi cu rațiune. După ce rosti ultimele cuvinte pe un ton

Rosamond sat perfectly still. The thought in her mind was that if she had known how Lydgate would behave, she would never have married him.

(in *Middlemarch* 557-9)

de rugă, Rosamunda se întoarse în fotoliul de lângă el. Felul cum luase asupra lui tot blamul îi dădea oarecare speranţă că ar putea să fie convertit la părerea ei, şi i se adresă:

—De ce nu poţi amâna inventarul mobilierului? Poţi să trimiţi oamenii la plimbare, când or să vină mâine.

—Nu-i voi trimite la plimbare, afirmă Lydgate, din nou ferm. Ce rost avea să mai explice?

—Dacă ne-am muta din Middlemarch, fireşte că am organiza o vânzare, şi atunci aşa ceva ar avea un sens.

—Dar nu vom părăsi Middlemarch-ul.

—Sunt convinsă, Tertius, că ar fi mult mai bine să procedăm astfel. De ce nu ne putem muta la Londra? Sau lângă Durham, unde familia ta e cunoscută?

—Nu ne putem muta nicăieri fără bani, Rosamunda.

—Prietenii tăi nu te-ar lăsa fără bani. Şi desigur că negustorii aceia odioşi ar putea fi făcuţi să înţeleagă acest lucru şi să mai aştepte, dacă le-ai înfăţişa situaţia aşa cum se cuvine.

—E zadarnic, Rosamunda, răspunse Lydgate înfuriat. Trebuie să te-nveţi să te bizui pe judecata mea în chestiuni pe care nu le pricepi. Am luat măsurile necesare şi ele trebuie să fie duse la îndeplinire. Cât despre prieteni, nu mă aştept la absolut nimic din partea lor, şi nu le pot cere nimic.

Rosamunda stătea complet neclintită. Mintea ei era stăpânită de gândul că, dacă ar fi ştiut cum se va purta Lydgate, în viaţa ei

nu s-ar fi măritat cu el.

[Traducere de Eugen B. Marian, colecția Biblioteca pentru toți, Editura Minerva, 1977]

I Will Learn What Everything Costs

Though returned, the love of Dorothea for Will Ladislaw and his for her has been stifled by social conventions, moral obligations and misunderstandings – such as Dorothea's duty as a wife and then as a widow and Will's misinterpretation of her attitude. The dialogue below – which takes place at the end of the novel – is full of strength of feeling and represents re-establishment of communication between them, clearing up of mistakes and misunderstandings, opening of hearts, sincere assertion of love for each other and liberated optimism.

They stood silent, not looking at each other, but looking at the evergreens which were being tossed, and were showing the pale underside of their leaves against the blackening sky. Will never enjoyed the prospect of a storm so much: it delivered him from the necessity of going away. Leaves and little branches were hurled about, and the thunder was getting nearer. The light was more and more sombre, but there came a flash of lightning which made them start and look at each other, and then smile. Dorothea began to say what she had been thinking of.

'That was a wrong thing for you to say, that you would have had nothing to try for. If we had lost our own chief good, other people's good would remain, and that is worth trying for. Some can be happy. I seemed to see that more clearly than ever, when I was the most wretched. I can hardly think how I could have borne the trouble, if that feeling had not come to me to make strength.'

'You have never felt the sort of misery I felt,' said Will; 'the misery of knowing that you must despise me.'

'But I have felt worse—it was worse to think ill—Dorothea had begun impetuously, but broke off.

Will coloured. He had the sense that whatever she said was uttered in the vision of a fatality that kept them apart. He was silent a moment, and then said passionately—'

'We may at least have the comfort of speaking to each other without disguise. Since I must go away—since we must always be divided—you may think of me as one on the brink of the grave.'

While he was speaking there came a vivid flash of lightning which lit each of them up for the other—and the light seemed

to be the terror of a hopeless love. Dorothea darted instantaneously from the window; Will followed her, seizing her hand with a spasmodic movement; and so they stood, with their hands clasped, like two children, looking out on the storm, while the thunder gave a tremendous crack and roll above them, and the rain began to pour down. Then they turned their faces towards each other, with the memory of his last words in them, and they did not loose each other's hands.

'There is no hope for me,' said Will. 'Even if you loved me as well as I love you—even if I were everything to you—I shall most likely always be very poor: on a sober calculation, one can count on nothing but a creeping *lot. It is impossible for us ever to belong to each other. It is perhaps base of me to have asked for a word from you. I meant to go away into silence, but I have not been able to do what I meant.'

'Don't be sorry,' said Dorothea, in her clear tender tones. 'I would rather share all the trouble of our parting.'

Her lips trembled, and so did his. It was never known which lips were the first to move towards the other lips; but they kissed tremblingly, and then they moved apart.

The rain was dashing against the window-panes as if an angry spirit were within it, and behind it was the great *swoop of the wind; it was one of those moments in which both the busy and the idle pause with a certain *awe.

Dorothea sat down on the seat nearest to her, a long low *ottoman in the middle of the room, and with her hands folded over each other on her lap, looked at the *drear outer world. Will stood still an instant looking at her, then seated himself beside her, and laid his hand on hers, which turned itself upward to be clasped. They sat in that way without looking at each other, until the rain abated and began to fall in stillness. Each had been full of thoughts which neither of them could begin to utter.

But when the rain was quiet, Dorothea turned to look at Will. With passionate exclamation, as if some torture screw were threatening him, he started up and said, 'It is impossible!'

He went and leaned on the back of the chair again, and seemed to be battling with his own anger, while she looked towards him sadly.

'It is as fatal as a murder or any other horror that divides people,' he burst out again; 'it is more intolerable—to have our life maimed by petty accidents.'

'No—don't say that—your life need not be maimed,' said Dorothea, gently.

'Yes, it must,' said Will, angrily. 'It is cruel of you to speak in that way—as if there were any comfort. You may see beyond the misery of it, but I don't. It is unkind—it is throwing back my love for you as if it were a trifle, to speak in that way in the face of the fact. We can never be married.'

'Some time—we might,' said Dorothea, in a trembling voice.

'When?' said Will, bitterly. 'What is the use of counting on any success of mine? It is a mere toss up whether I shall ever do more than keep myself decently, unless I choose to sell myself as a mere pen and a mouthpiece. I can see that clearly enough. I could not offer myself to any woman, even if she had no luxuries to renounce.'

There was silence. Dorothea's heart was full of something that she wanted to say, and yet the words were too difficult. She was wholly possessed by them: at that moment debate was mute within her. And it was very hard that she could not say what she wanted to say. Will was looking out of the window angrily. If he would have looked at her and not gone away from her side, she thought everything would have been easier. At last he turned, still resting against the chair, and stretching his hand automatically towards his hat, said with a sort of exasperation, 'Good-by.'

'Oh, I cannot bear it—my heart will break,' said Dorothea, starting from her seat, the flood of her young passion bearing down all the obstructions which had kept her silent—the great tears rising and falling in an instant: 'I don't mind about poverty—I hate my wealth.'

In an instant Will was close to her and had his arms round her, but she drew her head back and held his away gently that she might go on speaking, her large tear-filled eyes looking at his very simply, while she said in a sobbing childlike way, 'We could live quite well on my own fortune—it is too much—seven hundred a-year—I want so little—no new clothes—and I will learn what everything costs.'

(in *Middlemarch* 760-2)

Elizabeth Gaskell

(1810-1865)



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Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1865) was born in Chelsea, London, as the daughter of a Unitarian minister. When her mother died, she was brought up by a maternal aunt in the Cheshire village of Knutsford in a kindly atmosphere of rural gentility that was already old-fashioned at the time. In 1832 she married William Gaskell, a Unitarian minister, and settled in the overcrowded, problem-ridden industrial city of Manchester, which remained her home for the rest of her life.

As a result of her very busy domestic life she did not begin her literary activity until middle life, when the death of her only son had intensified her sense of community with the poor and her desire to 'give utterance' to their 'agony'. Her first novel, *Mary Barton* (1848), reflects the temper of Manchester in the late 1830s. Its timely appearance in the revolutionary year of 1848 brought the novel immediate success, and it won the praise of Charles Dickens and Thomas Carlyle. Dickens invited her to contribute to his magazine, *Household Words*, where her next major work, *Cranford* (1853)—the story of Cranford, a small rural Cheshire town, and of its inhabitants—appeared and soon became one of her most popular novels.

Her next social novel, *Ruth* (1853), with its treatment of false prudery and Victorian morality, offered an alternative to the seduced girl's traditional progress to prostitution and an early grave.

North and South (1855) describes the contrast between the kindly civilisation of the agricultural south and the individualism of the north during the years of industry and machinery.

Among the many friends attracted by Mrs Gaskell was Charlotte Brontë whose biography Charlotte's father, Patrick Brontë, urged her to write. The result was *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857), one of the first autobiographies written according to modern standards.

Her later works include *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863), dealing with the impact of the Napoleonic Wars upon simple people and *Wives and Daughters* (1864-1866), about the fortunes of two or three country families, considered by many her finest, left unfortunately unfinished at her death.

Elizabeth Gaskell's merit lies in her recognition of the actual situation of the world she lived in. As Williams argues (91), few

people displayed more genuine feelings of compassion for and adequate response to the industrial poor than her. Her realism is the result of her personal knowledge, and her association of descriptive realism with freshness, spontaneous teaching of the right side and earnestness of character treatment and with a due sense of its importance make her works a considerable achievement.

From *North and South*

The subject of this split between the rural and aristocratic south as the centre of political power and official culture and the industrial and productive north seen as the pioneer of civilisation was also used, quite successfully, by Dickens in *Hard Times*. *North and South* is like Dickens's novel *Hard Times* another 'condition of England novel', a sort of a documentary record, as Williams (87) sees it, in which she contemplates the industrial landscape of England, with its economic and social problems and reflects the echoes of Chartist effervescence. It a study in the contrast between the inhabitants of the industrialized North and those of the rather rural South of England. From this perspective, it is a documentary about the brutal penetration of mechanicism and industry into the people's lives, about the relations of employers and employees in industry. It is also a historical document illustrating early Victorian attitudes to social problems.

New Scenes and Faces

As a result of her father's financial straits, Margaret Hale is compelled to move from luxurious London and a quiet life in New Forest to Milton, an imaginary town and a fictional reconstruction of Manchester, then a murky cotton-spinning settlement. Milton is Mrs Gaskell's version of Dickens's Coketown, another Victorian dystopia which, like its Dickensian counterpart, has a similar gloomy, unfriendly and oppressive appearance.

For several miles before they reached Milton, they saw a deep lead-coloured cloud hanging over the horizon in the direction in which it lay. It was all the darker from the contrast with the pale ray-blue of the wintry sky; for in Heston there had been the earliest signs of frost. Nearer to the town, the air had a

Cu multe mile înainte de Milton, zăriră un nor plumburiu atârnând la orizont, în direcția în care se afla orașul. Părea cu atât mai întunecat cu cât cerul iernatic se întindea deasupra, de un cenuşiu-albăstrui spălăcit; căci, în Heston, apăruseră primele semne de îngheț. Cu cât se apropiau de oraş, cu atât văzduhul

faint taste of smell and smoke; perhaps, after all, more a loss of the fragrance of grass and herbage than any positive taste or smell. Quick they were whirled over long, straight, hopeless streets of regularly built houses, all small and of brick. Here and there a great oblong many-windowed factory stood up, like a hen amongst her chickens, puffing out black *'unparliamentary' smoke, and sufficiently accounting for the cloud which Margaret had taken to foretell rain. As they drove through the larger and wider streets, from the station to the hotel, they had to stop constantly; great loaded lorries blocked up the not over-wide *thoroughfares. Margaret had now and then been into the city in her drives, with her aunt. But there the heavy lumbering vehicles seemed various in their purposes and intent; here ever van, every wagon and truck, bore cotton, either in the raw shape in bags, or the woven shape in *bales of *calico. People thronged the footpaths, most of them well-dressed as regarded the material, but with a *slovenly *looseness which struck Margaret as different from the shabby, *threadbare smartness of a similar class in London.

(in *North and South* 59)

părea să miroase şi chiar să aibă gust de fum; de fapt, nu aerul avea cu adevărat gust sau miros, ci, mai degrabă, nu se simțea mireasma de iarbă şi verdeață. Curând, trecură în viteză pe lângă străzi lungi, drepte şi monotone, mărginite de case uniforme, toate scunde şi făcute din cărămidă. Pe alocuri, se înălța câte o imensă fabrică cu ferestre multe, ca o găină printre pui, din care ieşea un fum negru, „nereglementar", explicând pe deplin norul socotit de Margaret a prevesti ploaia. Pe măsură ce treceau pe străzile din ce în ce mai mari şi mai largi, în drumul lor de la gară la hotel, trebuiră hotel, trebuiră să se oprească mereu; camioane mari, încărcate, blocau trecerile nu prea largi. Margaret fusese câteodată prin cartierul comercial al Londrei, în plimbările cu trăsura pe care le făcuse împreună cu mătuşa ei. Dar acolo, vehiculele grele, greoaie păreau, fiecare, diferit de celălalt; aici, absolut fiecare căruță, cărucior şi vagonet era încărcat cu bumbac, fie în formă brută, în saci, fie țesut, în baloturi de stambă. Străzile erau înțesate cu oameni, cei mai mulți bine îmbrăcați, dacă aveai în vedere materialul veşmintelor, dar într-un fel neglijent, neîngrijit, care o izbi pe Margaret ca fiind diferit de dichiseala, fie şi ponosită, a categoriei similare din Londra.

[Traducere de Constantin Vonghizas, Editura Univers, București, 1970]

The Strike

In Milton Margaret comes into social contact with John Thornton, a local mill-owner and the stubborn and tough leader of the employers in a period of conflict with the workers. He is a pure kind of capitalist who fanatically believes in the laws of supply and demand. He has no compassion for the workers when times are bad and wages are low, and does not ask for pity when he himself faces ruin.

The text inserted below illustrates the violent riot of the workers in Mr Thornton's factory and Margaret Hale's brave conduct in front of the raging mob of strikers when she rescues him from the fury and violence of the rioters. Remarkable here is Elizabeth Gaskell's skill in depicting the psychology of the riotous mob. The scene has strong similarities with the riot scene in Charlotte Bronte's novel Shirley.

[…] And instantly the storm broke. The *hootings rose and filled the air,—but Margaret did not hear them. Her eyes were on the group of lads who had armed themselves with their *clogs some time before. She saw their gesture—she knew its meaning—she read their aim. Another moment, and Mr Thornton might be smitten down,—she whom she had urged and *goaded to come to this perilous place. She only thought how she could save him. She threw her arms around him; she made her body into a shield from the fierce people beyond. Still, with his arms folded, he shook her off.

'Go away,' said he, in his deep voice. 'This is no place for you.'

'It is,' said she. 'You did not see what I saw.' If she thought her sex would be a protection,—if, with shrinking eyes she had turned away from the terrible anger of these men, in any hope that *ere she looked again they would have paused and reflected, and *slunk away, and vanished,—she was wrong. Their reckless passion had carried them too far to stop—at least had carried some of them too far; for it is always the savage lads, with their love of cruel excitement, who head the riot—reckless to what bloodshed it may lead. A clog whizzed through the air. Margaret's fascinated eyes watched its progress; it missed its aim, and she turned sick with *affright, but changed not her position, only hid her face on Mr Thornton's arm. Then she turned and spoke again:

'For God's sake! do not damage your cause by this violence. You do not know what you are doing.' She strove to make her

words distinct.

A sharp pebble flew by her, *grazing forehead and cheek, and drawing a blinding sheet of light before her eyes. She lay like one dead on Mr Thornton's shoulder. The he unfolded his arms and held her encircled in one for an instant.

'You do well!' said he. 'You come to *oust the innocent stranger. You fall—you hundreds—on one man; and when a woman comes before you, to ask for your own sakes to be reasonable creatures, your cowardly wrath falls upon her! You do well!' They were silent while he spoke. They were watching, open-eyed, and open-mouthed, the thread of dark-red blood which wakened them up from the trance of their passion. Those nearest the gate stole out ashamed; there was a movement through all the crowd—a retreating movement. Only one voice cried out:

'Th' stone were meant for *thee; but *thou *wert sheltered behind a woman.'

Mr Thornton quivered with rage. The blood flowing had made Margaret conscious—dimly, vaguely conscious. He placed her gently on the door-step, her head leaning against the frame.

'Can you rest there?' he asked. But without waiting for her answer, he went slowly down the steps right into the middle of the crowd. 'Now kill me, if it is your brutal will. There is no woman to shield me here. You may beat me to death—you will never move me from what I have determined—not you!' He stood amongst them, with arms folded, in precisely the same attitude as he had been on the steps.

But the retrograde movement towards the gate had begun—as unreasoningly, perhaps as blindly, as the simultaneous anger. Or, perhaps the idea of the approach of the soldiers, and the sight of that pale, upturned face, with closed eyes, still and sad as marble, though the tears welled out of the long entanglement of eyelashes, and dropped down; and heavier, slower *plash than even tears, came the drip of blood from her wound. […] The moment that retreat had changed into a flight (as it was sure from its very character to do), he darted up the steps to Margaret.

She tried to rise without his help.

'It is nothing,' she said with a sickly smile. 'The skin is grazed, and I was stunned at the moment. Oh, I am so thankful they are gone!' And she cried without restraint.

He could not sympathise with her. His anger had not abated; it was rising the more as his sense of immediate danger was

passing away. The distant clank of the soldiers was heard; just five minutes too late to make his vanished mob feel the power of authority and order. He hoped they would see the troops, and he *quelled by the thought of their narrow escape. While these thoughts crossed his mind, Margaret clung to the doorpost to steady herself: but a film came over hear eyes—he was just in time to catch her. […] He bore her into the dining-room, and laid her on the sofa there; laid her down softly, and looking on her pure white face, the sense of what she was to him come upon him so keenly that she spoke it out in his pain:

'Oh, my Margaret—my Margaret! no one can tell what you are to me! Dead—cold as you lie there, you are the only woman I ever loved! Oh, Margaret—Margaret!'

(in *North and South* 179-80)

From *Mary Barton*

In *Mary Barton* Mrs Gaskell treats industrial and economic problems and reflects the echoes of Chartist effervescence. Together with the picture of the Barton family we see the life of the workers in Manchester of the Hungry Forties of the nineteenth century, a period of acute distress and unrest in the industrial districts. The novel is the story of a murder committed by a man, John Barton and his daughter, Mary Barton, caught in the violence of class conflict and torn between her conscience forcing her to clear the guilt off the shoulders an innocent man wrongly accused of murder and the despair of protecting and not betraying her father. Remarkable are the dimensions that John Barton acquires as a resolute man, class-conscious and ready to fight for the rights of the workers.

The novel impresses by its realism and Mrs Gaskell's undisguised sympathy with the poor, the oppressed and suffering. This attitude and her tendency to demonize the masters made the novel quite unpopular at the time. Many considered it subversive, as Forster points out (xvii), because their feeling was that masters were dealt with in more than an unfair way, that class struggle was represented in a distorted manner and that the novel might even incite to working-class protest. However, Forster continues, today Gaskell's radicalism is no longer felt to harm the literary merits of the novel, on the contrary, it is considered one of its strengths.

Masters and Workers

The fragment below is extracted from Chapter XVI of the novel, the encounter between the masters and the people on strike. Remarkable is Mrs Gaskell's deep understanding of the workers' problems and her earnest attitude of taking the strikers' side. The episode, in its treatment of the result of social in justice, has similarities with the scene of the riot in Charlotte Brontë's novel Shirley *and the violent strike in* North and

South.

Many […] Trades' Unions, connected with different branches of business, supported with money, countenance, and encouragement of every kind, the stand which the Manchester power-loom weavers were making against their masters. Delegates from Glasgow, from Nottingham, and other towns, were sent to Manchester, to keep up the spirit of resistance; a committee was formed, and all the requisite officers elected; chairman, treasurer, honorary secretary;—among them was John Barton.

The masters, meanwhile, took their measures. They placarded the walls with advertisements for power-loom weavers. The workmen replied by a placard in still larger letters, stating their grievances. The masters met daily in town, to mourn over the time (so fast slipping away) for the fulfilment of the foreign orders; and to strengthen each other in their resolution not to yield. If they gave up now, they might give up always. It would never do. And amongst the most energetic of the masters, the Carsons, father and son, took their places. It is well known, that there is no religionist so zealous as a convert; no masters so stern, and regardless of the interests of their workpeople, as those who have risen from such a station themselves. This would account for the elder Mr. Carson's determination not to be bullied into yielding; not even to be bullied into giving reasons for acting as the masters did. It was the employers' will, and that should be enough for the employed. Harry Carson did not trouble himself much about the grounds for his conduct. He liked the excitement of the affair. He liked the attitude of resistance. He was brave, and he liked the idea of personal danger, with which some of the more cautious tried to intimidate the violent among the masters.

Meanwhile, the power-loom weavers living in the more remote parts of Lancashire, and the neighbouring counties, heard of the masters' advertisements for workmen; and in their solitary dwellings grew weary of starvation, and resolved to come to Manchester. Foot-sore, way-worn, half-starved looking men they were, as they tried to steal into town in the early dawn, before people were astir, or in the dusk of the evening. And now began the real wrong-doing of the Trades' Unions. As to their decision to work, or not, at such a particular rate of wages, that was either wise or unwise; all error of judgment at the worst. But they had no right to tyrannise over others, and tie them down to their own Procrustean bed. Abhorring what they considered oppression in the masters, why did they oppress others? Because, when men get excited, they know not what they do. Judge,

then, with something of the mercy of the Holy One, whom we all love.

In spite of policemen set to watch over the safety of the poor country weavers—in spite of magistrates, and prisons, and severe punishments—the poor depressed men tramping in from Burnley, Padiham, and other places, to work at the condemned 'Starvation Prices,' were *waylaid, and beaten, and left by the roadside almost for dead. The police broke up every lounging knot of men:—they separated quietly, to reunite half-a-mile out of town.

Of course the feeling between the masters and workmen did not improve under these circumstances.

Combination is an awful power. It is like the equally mighty agency of steam; capable of almost unlimited good or evil. But to obtain a blessing on its labours, it must work under the direction of a high and intelligent will; incapable of being misled by passion or excitement. The will of the operatives had not been guided to the calmness of wisdom.

So much for generalities. Let us now return to individuals.

A note, respectfully worded, although its tone of determination was strong, had been sent by the power-loom weavers, requesting that a *'deputation' of them might have a meeting with the masters, to state the conditions they must have fulfilled before they would end the *turn-out. They thought they had attained a sufficiently commanding position to dictate. John Barton was appointed one of the deputation.

The masters agreed to this meeting, being anxious to end the strife, although undetermined among themselves how far they should yield, or whether they should yield at all. Some of the old, whose experience had taught them sympathy, were for concession. Others, white-headed men too, had only learnt hardness and obstinacy from the days of the years of their lives, and sneered at the more gentle and yielding. The younger men were one and all for an unflinching resistance to claims urged with so much violence.

(in *Mary Barton* 167-9)

From *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*

The *Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857) was written by Elizabeth Gaskell at the request of Rev. Patrick Brontë, Charlotte Brontë's father. The result is a biographic work of art written with narrative skill by a writer about another writer, with friendliness and warm-hearted admiration and consideration. As Easson states (xi), Mrs Gaskell's aim was to represent the truth with objectivity and exactness, to interpret Charlotte for the readers, to give them her background and her formative experience. *The Life* is a well-documented interpretation of its subject that benefitted from a wealth of first hand material—letters, interviews, notes and direct observation. It is a work that is the result of intense collaboration between author and subjects, between author and the living, but also about how much collaboration can make the work advance or constraint (Easson xi).

As modern criticism has remarked, it is a pioneering work complying with the requirements of modern standards of biographic works.

How *Jane Eyre* Was Written

*The fragment below offer the readers details about the first fictional literary productions of the Brontë sisters (*Wuthering Heights, Agnes Gray *and* Jane Eyre*), their composition and publication, the sisters' literary evenings in their home at Haworth and insists on Charlotte's manner of writing – her very selective choice of words – her reasons for conceiving her heroine, Jane Eyre, as a plain girl in spite of her sisters' opinion that only good-looking heroines can be interesting, and the manner the novel* Jane Eyre *was born.*

All this time, notwithstanding the domestic anxieties which were harassing them [the Brontë sisters]—notwithstanding the ill-success of their poems—the three sisters were trying that other literary venture […]. Each of them had written a prose tale,

hoping that the three might be published together. 'Wuthering Heights' and 'Agnes Grey' are before the world. The third—Charlotte's contribution—is yet in manuscript, but will be published shortly after the appearance of this memoir. The plot in itself is of no great interest; but it is a poor kind of interest that depends upon startling incidents rather than upon dramatic development of character; and Charlotte Brontë never excelled one or two sketches of portraits which she had given in 'The Professor', nor, in grace of womanhood, ever surpassed one of the female characters there described. By the time she wrote this tale, her taste and judgment had revolted against the exaggerated idealisms of her early girlhood, and she went to the extreme of reality, closely depicting characters as they had shown themselves to her in actual life: if there they were strong even to coarseness,—as was the case with some that she had met with in flesh and blood existence,—she 'wrote them down an ass;' if the scenery of such life as she saw was for the most part wild and grotesque, instead of pleasant or picturesque, she described it line for line. The grace of the one or two scenes and characters, which are drawn rather from her own imagination than from absolute fact stand out in exquisite relief from the deep shadows and *wayward lines of others, which call to mind some of the portraits of Rembrandt.

The three tales had tried their fate in vain together, at length they were sent forth separately, and for many months with still—continued ill success. I have mentioned this here, because, among the dispiriting circumstances connected with her anxious visit to Manchester, Charlotte told me that her tale came back upon her hands, curtly rejected by some publisher, on the very day when her father was to submit to his operation. But she had the heart of Robert Bruce within her, and failure upon failure daunted her no more than him. Not only did 'The Professor' return again to try his chance among the London publishers, but she began, in this time of care and depressing inquietude, in those grey, weary, uniform streets; where all faces, save that of her kind doctor, were strange and untouched with sunlight to her,—there and then, did the brave genius begin 'Jane Eyre'. Read what she herself says:—Currer Bell's book found acceptance nowhere, nor any acknowledgment of merit, so that something like the chill of despair began to invade his heart.' And, remember it was not the heart of a person who, disappointed in one hope, can turn with redoubled affection to the many certain blessings that remain. Think of her home, and the black shadow of remorse lying over one in it, till his very brain was mazed, and his gifts and his life were lost;—think of her father's sight hanging on a thread;—of her sister's delicate health, and dependence on her care;—and then admire as it deserves to be admired, the steady

courage which could work away at 'Jane Eyre', all the time 'that the one-volume tale was plodding its weary round in London.' […]

Any one who has studied her writings,—whether in print or in her letters; any one who has enjoyed the rare privilege of listening to her talk, must have noticed her singular felicity in the choice of words. She herself, in writing her books, was solicitous on this point. One set of words was the truthful mirror of her thoughts; no others, however apparently identical in meaning, would do. […] She never wrote down a sentence until she clearly understood what she wanted to say, had deliberately chosen the words, and arranged them in their right order. Hence it comes that, in the scraps of paper covered with her pencil writing which I have seen, there will occasionally be a sentence scored out, but seldom, if ever, a word or an expression. She wrote on these bits of paper in a minute hand, holding each against a piece of board, such as is used in binding books, for a desk. This plan was necessary for one so short-sighted as she was; and, besides, it enabled her to use pencil and paper, as she sat near the fire in the twilight hours, or if (as was too often the case) she was wakeful for hours in the night. Her finished manuscripts were copied from these pencil scraps, in clear, legible, delicate traced writing, almost as easy to read as print.

The sisters retained the old habit, which was begun in their aunt's life-time, of putting away their work at nine o'clock, and beginning their study, pacing up and down the sitting room. At this time, they talked over the stories they were engaged upon, and described their plots. Once or twice a week, each read to the others what she had written, and heard what they had to say about it. Charlotte told me, that the remarks made had seldom any effect in inducing her to alter her work, so possessed was she with the feeling that she had described reality; but the readings were of great and stirring interest to all, taking them out of the *gnawing pressure of daily-recurring cares, and setting them in a free place. It was on one of these occasions, that Charlotte determined to make her heroine plain, small, and unattractive, in defiance of the accepted canon. […]

She once told her sisters that they were wrong—even morally wrong—in making their heroines beautiful as a matter of course. They replied that it was impossible to make a heroine interesting on any other terms. Her answer was, 'I will prove to you that you are wrong; I will show you a heroine as plain and as small as myself, who shall be as interesting as any of yours.' Hence 'Jane Eyre,' said she in telling the anecdote: 'but she is not myself, any further than that.' As the work went on, the interest deepened to the writer. When she came to 'Thornfield' she could not stop. Being short-sighted to excess, she wrote in little square

paper-books, held close to her eyes, and (the first copy) in pencil. On she went, writing incessantly for three weeks; by which time she had carried her heroine away from Thornfield, and was herself in a fever which compelled her to pause.

(in *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* 245-8)

Alfred Tennyson

(1809-1892)



Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892) was born in Somersby Rectory in Lincolnshire. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. Here Alfred joined the Apostles—an exclusive group of intellectuals—and became a friend of the most brilliant of them, Arthur Henry Hallam, the son of the nineteenth century historian Henry Hallam. His first volume of poems was *Poems by Two Brothers*, published in 1830 together with his brother Charles (their brother Frederick also contributed to the volume but did not want his name to be mentioned), while he was still at Cambridge. Tennyson's next published volume was *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (1830), quite unfavourably received.

In 1833 his best friend, Arthur Henry Hallam, died suddenly while on a trip to Vienna, which shocked him and made him start working on poems that were to be collected in *In Memoriam*, his most profoundly moving and mournful book of meditative verses (published complete in 1850). 1833 is also the year of his next volume of poetry, *Poems*, quite criticised, too. It contained, among other poems, 'The Two Voices', 'Oenone', 'The Lotos Eaters', 'A Dream of Fair Women', 'The Palace of Art' and 'The Lady of Shalott'.

Success and recognition came in 1842 when *Poems* (in two volumes) was published. It included some of his finest poems: 'Morte d'Arthur' (the first germ of the *Idylls*), 'Locksley Hall', 'Ulysses', 'Sir Galahad', 'Lancelot and Lady Guinevere'. In 1847 he published his long poem *The Princess* followed in 1850 by the complete version of *In Memoriam A. H. H.*, the series of poems that he wrote to commemorate his deceased friend, Arthur Henry Hallam. These poems were very much appreciated and, together with his previously published poetry (included chiefly in the 1842 volume), brought him in 1851 the title of Poet Laureate in succession to Wordsworth, as official recognition of his creative merits.

Tennyson took his new official position very earnestly and produced occasional poems on 'the affairs of state' like, for instance: 'To the Queen' (1851), 'On the Death of the Duke of Wellington' (1852), 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' (1854)—about a contemporary episode in the Crimean War—or 'Ode for the Opening of the International Exhibition' (1862).

In 1850 the poet got married to Emily Selwood in spite of her family's strong opposition. Their first baby was stillborn but it was followed, the next year, by another child who was christened Hallam. In 1854 the couple settled in a secluded home on the Isle of Wight to escape the crowds of admirers who used to come to their Twickenham home. The Queen and the Prince Consort had always been great admirers of Tennyson and now his popularity with the British public grew to extraordinary heights. This was materialised in the offer of a peerage which Tennyson accepted in 1884, after having turned it down twice.

He published *Maud* in 1855 and in 1859 four of the *Idylls of the King*, which established his fame and popularity. The volume *Enoch Arden and Other Poems* appeared in 1864 and was followed by *Ballads and Other Poems* in 1880, *Tiresias and Other Poems* in 1885 and the complete version of *Idylls of the King* in 1885. The volume *Demeter and Other Poems* published in 1889 contained his famous poem 'Crossing the Bar', which was to become the poet's epitaph. His last volume of poetry was *The Death of Oenone, Akbar's Dream and Other Poems* (1892).

Tennyson died in 1892 and was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey after national funeral ceremonies.

Tennyson's work is a direct continuation of Romanticism. Nevertheless, he is aware of the new influences at work in the epoch, he feels the attraction of science and critical thought and tries to adapt himself to the age's principal requirements. While Romanticism praised spontaneity of feeling, for Tennyson what is important is discipline of form, reason and balance, governed by a conscientious and meticulous artist. His poetry, moulded into rigorous form, is characterised by intensity of perception and expression, elaborate ornamental effects, musicality and a taste for a sober type of beauty and a touch of intellectual refinement.

From 'The Lady of Shalott'

The poem (included in the 1833 volume) metaphorically represents artistic creation and the condition of the artist often condemned to live in solitary confinement, away from the world of everyday existence. The Lady is a weaver weaving day and night, an artist whose only link with the real world is her mirror (i.e. the mirror in which weavers look to see the progress of their work) facing her loom and where 'shadows of the world appear'. Her attempt to escape into the real world outside her prison, symbolised by Lancelot and the Palace of Camelot, will prove to be fatal for her—she dies drowned when attempting to cross the river. Underlying the poem is a rather pessimistic point of view: that the artist cannot find his place in the common world.

The story of this poem will be developed more fully in 'Lancelot and Elaine', one of the poems of *The Idylls of the King*.

There She Weaves

The first two parts of the poem reproduced below provide the setting, the enchanting Island of Shalott, and introduces the Lady of Shalott busy with her activity, of weaving day and night, dedicated to her work and isolated from the outside world.

Part I
On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the *wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd *Camelot;

Partea I
De-a lungul râului se-ntind
De grâie lanuri, unduind,
Ce şesul pân' sub zări cuprind;
Poteci pe câmp trec, năzuind
Către cetatea Camelot.

And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, *aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four grey walls, and four grey towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle *imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The *shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

În sus şi-n jos păşesc drumari
Şi cată peste lacuri mari,
Peste învolții nenufari
Spre ostrovul Shalott.

Tremur' plopi, albesc răchite,
Bat zefiri şi, zgribulite,
Gârle năvălesc grăbite
Spre ostrovul ocolit de
Ape, jos, la Camelot.
Patru sure foişoare
Priveghează lunci în floare...
Iar în ostrov cuib îşi are
Domnița din Shalott.

Pe sub maluri mult umbroase
Lunecă bărci grele, trase
De cai lâncezi şi netrase,
Dar cu vele de mătase,
Zboară-n jos către Camelot.
Dar cine oare i-a văzut
Al mâinii gest, la geam făcut?
Cine cunoaşte din ținut
Domnița din Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
        Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "Tis the fairy
        Lady of Shalott.'

Part II
There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
        To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
        The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,

Doar secerători, dând zor
Prin bărbosul orz al lor,
Aud viers veselitor
Dinspre râul cotitor
        Către cetatea Camelot.
Seara, sub făclii cereşti,
Spun secerătorii-aceşti:
„E frumoasă ca-n poveşti,
        E domnița din Shalott."

Partea a II-a
Zi şi noapte-aici ea țese
Văl vrăjit, în fețe-alese...
Dar o şoaptă îi spusese
Că blesteme-au s-o apese
        De-o privi spre Camelot.
Ci, nepăsându-i de blesteme,
Tot hărnicea cu-a sale gheme,
Căci de griji mari n-are-a se teme
        Domnița din Shalott.

Şi putea printr-o oglindă,
Ce-i sta-n față, licărindă,

Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
          Winding down to Camelot:
There the river *eddy whirls,
And there the *surly village-*churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
          Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an *ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
          Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
          The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
          And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,

Cu privirea să cuprindă
Lumea care se perindă
          Pe drumeag spre Camelot.
Cum râul în bulboane se repede,
Ţărani morocănoşi trecând, şi fete
Şi târgoveţe-n bunde roşii vede
          Domniţa din Shalott.

Ades duduci, în cârd zglobiu,
Un popă-n şa, pe bidiviu,
Oieri cu părul creţ, mieriu,
Sau paji pletoşi, în purpuriu,
          Veneau la naltul Camelot.
Vedea-n oglindă, când şi când,
Perechi de cavaleri trecând
Cum nu slujiseră nicicând
Domniţei din Shalott.

Ţesind, simţea cum o desfată
Tot ce oglinda fermecată
În tihna nopţilor i-arată:
Câte-un alai cernit ce cată
          Să intre-n Camelot,
Sau, când pe cer luna lucea,

Came two young lovers lately wed;
'I am half sick of shadows,' said
The Lady of Shalott.

(in *Collected Poems* 43-5)

Şi doi miri juni zărea-n vâlcea...
„Sătulă-s de năluci", ofta
Domnița din Shalott.

[Traducere de Leon Levițchi și Tudor Dorin, Editura Minerva, București, 1981-1984]

From the 'The Palace of Art'

'The Palace of Art' (included in the 1833 volume) also explores the condition of the artist. Consequently, it may be considered to be, to a certain extent, a sequel and a correlate to 'The Lady of Shalott', as it explores the same form of imprisonment: that of the world of spirituality and pleasure which may be seen as a possible substitute for the real world. The palace contains priceless artefacts that stand for the myths, art, literature, philosophy and science of humankind. But this is not a place to be lived in for ever and the heroine realizes that she has to return to common, everyday life.

The woman who imprisons herself in her palace symbolizes the poet imprisoned in the world of his art according to the model of many Victorian wives, often confined to an ideal home (Turner 21). The message underlying the poem is somewhat opposite to that of 'The Lady of Shalott': living vicariously in such a hedonistic world of representations is impossible, life has to be lived directly and in its simple forms, as the heroine realises at the end of the poem.

The Pleasure-House

The fragment which follows introduces the reader to the location of the Palace of Art that the heroine of the poem builds for her soul as a realm of egoistic withdrawal and offers an alluring picture of it in words and in the manner so characteristic to Tennyson.

I built my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for *aye to dwell.
I said, 'O Soul, make merry and *carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well.'

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd brass
    I chose. The ranged ramparts bright
From level meadow-bases of deep grass
        Suddenly *scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of *ledge or shelf
    The rock rose clear, or winding stair.
My soul would live alone unto herself
        In her high palace there.

And 'while the world runs round and round,' I said,
    'Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast shade
        Sleeps on his luminous ring.'

To which my soul made answer readily:
    'Trust me, in bliss I shall *abide
In this great mansion, that is built for me,
        So royal-rich and wide.'

*

Four courts I made, East, West and South and North,
    In each a squared lawn, wherefrom
The golden gorge of dragons *spouted forth

A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row
Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods,
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow
Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery
That lent broad verge to distant lands,
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky
*Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one *swell
Across the mountain stream'd below
In misty *folds, that floating as they fell
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up
A cloud of incense of all odour steam'd
From out a golden cup.

(in *Collected Poems* 68-9)

Make Me a Cottage in the Vale

After four years of secluded life in the self-gratifying world of art, the heroine decides that she has to abandon her palace and return to normal life among common people. But she does not want to pull down the palace because she 'may return with others there' when she has been purged of her guilt of having abandoned this world to live in an artificial one made only for herself.

She, *mouldering with the dull earth's mouldering *sod,
Inwrapt tenfold in *slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,
Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,
And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,
And ever worse with growing time,
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
And all alone in crime:

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, *girt round
With blackness as a solid wall,

Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moon-rise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea;

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry
Of great wild beasts; then thinketh, 'I have found
A new land, but I die.'

She howl'd aloud, 'I am on fire within.
There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die?'

So when four years were wholly finished,
She threw her royal robes away.
'Make me a cottage in the vale,' she said,
'Where I may mourn and pray.

'Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are

So lightly, beautifully built;
Perchance I may return with others there
When I have purged my guilt.'

(in *Collected Poems* 75-6)

From 'The Lotos-Eaters'

This poem (included in the 1833 volume, then heavily revised in the 1842 volumes), like 'The Lady of Shalott' and 'The Palace of Art', also examines the theme of withdrawal. It is based on the episode called 'The Lotophagi' in Homer's *Odyssey*. On their voyage homeward, Odysseus and his men set foot on a strange island inhabited by a people who fed on the fruit of a plant—the lotus—the effect of which was indolent forgetfulness. The land of the Lotos-eaters is depicted as a terrestrial paradise where life is languid, a place where one would want to stay for ever because of its mesmerizing lure and not so much as a result of having eaten the lotus fruit.

This serene territory of peace seduces the sailors completely and, when the effect of the intoxicating lotus is added to the seduction, they forget all about their homes and families, their toil and the hardships of everyday life. The real world of adversities is replaced with an euphoric and hedonistic world of lasting sensations and pleasures as it appears in the second part of the poem, called 'Choric Song'. At this stage, any feeling of responsibility has disappeared and, as Armstrong remarks (89), in this part of the poem under the narcotic effect of the lotus, perception is aurally and visually distorted and disordered and everything occurs in a half-dream atmosphere.

Land of Slumber

The extract below is the first part of the poem, full of beauty in its depiction of the island's paradisiacal setting and charged with the mesmerising musicality of Tennyson's verse. The 'he' in the first line refers to Odysseus (Ulysses).

'Courage!' he said, and pointed toward the land,

'This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.'
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.
A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest *lawn, did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a *slumberous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with showery drops,
Up-*clomb the shadowy pine above the woven *copse.
The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow *down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender *galingale;
A land where all things always seem'd the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale,

Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.
Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but who so did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow *spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.
They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, 'We will return no more;'
And all at once they sang, 'Our *island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam.'

(in *Collected Poems*, 81-2)

From 'Ulysses'

This is another poem (published in the 1842 volumes) showing that classical mythology had became a topic of interest for Tennyson. Tennyson did not start in this dramatic monologue from the Homeric creation but from the way Dante presents Ulysses in chapter XXVI of his *Inferno*. Tennyson's Ulysses is a Romantic hero portrayed in the last years of his life who refuses to see himself as a victim. He is not willing to abandon active life and be 'an idle king', but he is eager to go on another odyssey with his old companions, 'to sail beyond the sunset' and 'to follow knowledge like a sinking star'. He considers that life must never be abandoned but be lived even at old age.

Here, unlike in 'The Lotos-Eaters', the theme of withdrawal and the temptation to idleness are examined form a different angle: the need for endeavour, for never giving up active life and (re)action in any circumstance. The message of the whole poem, and the meaning of the poem's last line, in particular—To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield' (in *Collected Poems* 148)—are extremely significant for Tennyson who needed these words as encouragement in his attempt to overcome his depression and lethargy caused by the death of his friend Arthur Hallam and to be able to face life again.

An Idle King

The fragment below, spoken by Ulysses to his son, Telemachus, illustrates the king's decision not to live passively but to continue to live his life in an active manner.

It little profits that an idle king,	Biet rege stând cu vârstnica mea soață
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,	În fața vetrei, printre stânci pustii,

Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and *dole
Unequal *laws unto a savage race,
That *hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the *lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' *scudding drifts the rainy *Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved

Ce noimă are să-ntocmesc legi strâmbe
Pentru un neam barbar ce strânge prăzi,
Mănâncă, doarme şi nu mă cunoaşte?
Simt iarăşi dor de ducă—voi bea viața
Până la drojdii. Mult m-am veselit
Întotdeauna, mult am îndurat,
Cu-ai mei sau singur, pe uscat, de-asemeni
Când prin a norilor grozave trâmbe
Ploioasele Hyade dojeneau
Pâcloasa mare – sunt acum un nume!
Tot pribegind cu inima-nsetată
Multe-am văzut şi cunoscut; meleaguri
Cetăți, moravuri, sfaturi şi domnii,
Cinstit de toți, sorbind plăcerea luptei
Pe vânzolitele câmpii troiene.
Din tot ce-am întâlnit sunt azi o parte;
Dar experiența e un arc prin care
Se vede lumea nebătătorită
Cu margini ce se şterg mereu când merg.
E trist să stai deoparte, ruginind
În loc să străluceşti prin folosință!
De parcă a sufla înseamnă viață!
Vieți peste vieți şi încă-ar fi puțin,
Iar dintr-a mea nu mai rămâne mult;

From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this grey spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

(in *Collected Poems* 147-8)

Dar fiecare ceas poate scăpa
De veşnica tăcere; şi în anii
Cât voi mai viețui e-o mârşăvie
Să stau şi să adun, iar într-acestea,
Căruntul duh să ardă de dorința
De-a urmări cunoaşterea, mult peste
Hotarele gândirii omeneşti –
Asemeni unei stele ce se stinge.
Acesta-i Telemac, feciorul meu
Atât mie de drag – şi lui îi las
Şi insula şi sceptrul; el va şti
Cu minte nepripită, să-mblânzească
Un neam sălbatic, să-l deprindă-ncet
Cu tot ce e folositor şi bun.
E-un suflet nepătat; atunci când plec,
Se-apleacă-asupra trebilor cu grijă.

[Traducere de Leon Levițchi şi Tudor Dorin, Editura Minerva, București, 1981-1984]

From *In Memoriam*

In Memoriam (1850) is a series of 131 sections or elegiac poems with a prologue and epilogue. Inspired by the grief Tennyson felt at the untimely death of his friend Arthur Hallam, the poems began as a sort of self-therapy for a poet who had lost his sense of living and was assailed by doubts and existential dilemmas. They were initially isolated lyrics but afterwards were gathered into a single volume and rearranged into a sequence. In them the author searches for the meaning of life and death and tries to come to terms with his sense of loss. *In Memoriam* reflects the Victorian crisis of belief and the attempt to reconcile traditional religious faith and trust in immortality with the emerging theories of evolution in modern science.

The poems move across the shadows and gloom of death towards the light and hope that must be found beyond such shadows. They show the poet's psychological recovery from despair, his progress from atheism towards atonement with God and the belief in the immortality of the soul. Tennyson's verses reveal that after three years the poet has accepted and understood his friend's death and the fact that now death is seen as a natural continuation of life.

Prologue

The prologue has the subtitle OBIIT MDCCXXXIII (He died in 1833) – the title and its subtitle directly introduce the readers to the purpose of the whole cycle – the ensuing poems were written in the memory and honour of Arthur Henry Hallam who died in 1833. In the verses that open the cycle and which are inserted below, the poet invokes, rather hesitatingly and apprehensively, an omnipotent but unconvincing God, a God whose presence and role are intuitively and spiritually felt but not materially known, a God who is feared and whose grandeur, mercy and understanding are invoked as a necessary postulate for what is said or implied in the lines that make up the cycle.
This introductory poem was written after the cycle was competed and its presence shows quite clearly that Tennyson felt it necessary to come

to terms with a God whose existence he had often denied and against whom he had often raised his voice in the cycle.

Strong Son of God, immortal Love
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith and faith alone embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these *orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest life in man and brute;
Thou madest death; and *lo thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou are just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou.
Our wills are yours, we know not how;
Our wills are yours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;

They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, are more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know,
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee.
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear:
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seemed my sin in me;
What seemed my worth since I began;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,

Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

(in *Collected Poems* 285-6)

XXII

This elegiac sequence is symmetrically constructed as it opposes the spring and summer of life and light of the days when the two friends were together and when the Shadow had not yet claimed the life of the friend, with the autumn of darkness and shadows that has destroyed their friendship and has borne the young man where eyes can no longer see. The poem ends on a pessimistic note – the Shadow is an overwhelming and lurking presence from which there is no chance of escape.

The path by which we *twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,
Through four sweet years arose and fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to snow.

And we with singing cheered the way,
And crowned with all the season lent,
From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to May:

But where the path we walked began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
As we descended following hope,
There sat the shadow feared of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,
    And spread his mantle dark and cold;
    And wrapt thee formless in the fold,
And dulled the murmur on thy lip;

And bore thee where I could not see
    Nor follow, though I walk in haste;
    And think that, somewhere in the waste,
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

(in *Selected Poems* 145-6)

LVI

Sequence LVI reflects the most dramatic phase of the poet's existential crisis. It 'envisages no less than the obliteration of the human species, the end of its history', as Armstrong remarks (262). Now the poet asks himself questions without an answer about the condition of man in this world placed as he is at the mercy of cruel Nature – referred to as 'She' and seen as primitive and amoral, alienated from God (Lootens 142) – about the existence and role of the divinity. What is the use of creation if it is followed by destruction? And in this situation what is the sense of life? The poem ends with a tormenting and obsessive question about what lies 'behind the veil', beyond the border that ends this life. The answer is found later on in 'Crossing the Bar'.

'So careful of the type?' but no.
From scarpèd cliff and quarried stone
She cries, 'A thousand types are gone;
I care for nothing, all shall go.

'Thou makest thine appeal to me:
I bring to life, I bring to death;
The spirit does but mean the breath;
I know no more.' And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who rolle' the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him *fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
    And love's Creation's final law—
    Though Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shrieked against the creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
    Who battled for the True, the Just,
    Be blown about the desert dust,
Or *seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,
    A discord. Dragons of the *prime,
    That *tare each other in their *slime,
Were mellow music *match'd with him.

O life as futile, then as frail!
    O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
    What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

(in *Collected Poems* 314-5)

From *The Idylls of the King*

Idylls of the King is the result of a project that Tennyson had long considered—to write a whole great epic on King Arthur. It was issued at intervals between 1857 and 1885 and appeared complete in 1889. The *Idylls* is a series of 12 connected poems broadly surveying the well-known legend of King Arthur, and arranged as 10 central poems, symmetrically flanked by 'The Coming of Arthur' and 'The Passing of Arthur'. Tennyson's source material was Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* and the *Idylls* represent his attempt to recycle romantic material and give it moralizing overtones in accordance with Victorian standards to fit the nineteenth century attitude.

Tennyson's intention was not to add anything to the stories of the Round Table, but to retell the legends as idylls and wrap them in a purely poetical and hued veil. The leitmotif of the cycle is the shattering of illusion ruined by Queen Guinevere's adulterous relationship with Lancelot. The cycle is placed under 'the progressive wheels of change' (Turner 37) when the old has to be replaced with the new. The overall feeling that that the poems convey to the readers is that of regret, nostalgia for something which has disappeared or will soon cease to be. As such, the progress of the cycle is negative: it begins with the coming of King Arthur, with his glory and that of the knights of the Round Table and ends with the ultimate ruin of King Arthur's kingdom and the subsequent fading of the hope that had at first infused the Round Table fellowship. In accordance with their theme the poems take the reader from the bright colours and warmth of the beginning to the mists and winter-cold of the end.

Tennyson is a genius in his pictures of mood, in his descriptive style and in the cultivation of the idyll as form of verse but fails when he tries to present characters. Regrettably, no memorable figure emerges from the poems—Arthur is not what the readers might expect from the cycle's main hero, he is just as spiritless as Lancelot and Guinevere.

The Death of Arthur

As stated before, Tennyson's cycle of Idylls *had as their starting point Thomas Malory's story of King Arthur* Le Morte d'Arthur, *a text written in the fifteenth century. This is the source text of Tennyson's 'Passing of Arthur', the last poem in the series. The text from Malory is quite flat in its sole aim to narrate the events.*

Then Sir Bedevere cried: Ah my lord Arthur, what shall become of me, now ye go from me and leave me here alone among mine enemies? Comfort thyself, said the king, and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust for to trust in; for I will go into the vale of Avilion to heal me of my grievous wound: and if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul. But ever the queens and ladies wept and shrieked, that it was pity to hear. And as soon as Sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so took the forest.

(in *Le Morte d'Arthur* 415)

The Passing of Arthur

The following text extract describes the last moments of Arthur's life. From Sir Bedivere, the last of the surviving kings, we find out about the final moments of the king's life. Gawain's ghost comes and predicts evil. In fact, the forces of Mordred, the traitor, arrive at Lyonesse and a great battle follows in the course of which Arthur manages to kill Mordred, but is himself mortally wounded. He throws Excalibur, his sword, into the lake and is carried off in a black barge with three queens in it. In the fragment inserted below Sir Bedivere places the wounded king in the ship which is carrying the queens. Sir Bedivere sorrowfully realises that this is the end of the Round Table, now that all the other knights are dead.

*The poet recreates the medieval atmosphere with melancholy and places it in filtered light like that cast by the stained-glass of a cathedral. The lines insist on the necessity of change, of renewal but also on the perennial existence of God and the power of prayer. The quoted lines reflect his craft of using the language, of creating a setting and a mood and show the musical potential of his verses – as, for instance, in the last lines that picture the graceful dignity of the boat that takes Arthur to *Avalon.*

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
'Ah! My Lord Arthur, *whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy *Elders with the gift of *myrrh.
But now the whole Round table is dissolved

Moartea lui Arthur

Şi Bedivere strigă cu strigăt mare:
– „Vai, Arthur, unde mă voi duce? Unde
Îmi voi ascunde fruntea şi privirea?
Apus-au vremile când cavalerii
Cu zorile odată se năşteau,
Când sfinţi părinţi, cu dar de mirt şi smirnă,
Au fost mereu de stea călăuziţi.
Aşa s-a petrecut Masa rotundă,
Icoana neasemuitei lumi ce-a fost.

Which was an image of the mighty world,
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among strange men, strange faces, other minds.'
And slowly answered Arthur from the *barge,
'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself! What comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within himself make pure! But thou,
If thou shouldst never set my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are *wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. *Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seëst—if indeed I go
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)—

Eu, cel din urmă, nu mai am tovarăşi;
Şi, între oameni şi credințe noi,
Văd cum se-ntunec zilele şi anii."

Şi Arthur, din corabie, răspunse:
—„Se schimbă, iată, vechea rânduială
Şi loc îi face celei noi; iar Domnul
Îşi află împlinirea-n multe chipuri;
Un singur obicei, oricât de bun,
Poate să strice lumea. Mângâierea
Ți-o cată-n tine; eu nu ți-o pot da.
Mă rog lui Dumnezeu ca-n Sinea Lui
Să curețe ce fapte-am făptuit;
Iar tu, atunci când eu voi fi plecat,
Te roagă pentru mine. Rugăciunea
Mai multe lucruri poate săvârşi
Decât cred oamenii. Ca un izvor
Să ți se-nalțe glasul pentru mine.
Prin ce e omul mai presus de vita
Care hrăneşte-o viață-ntragă oarbă-n creier
Dacă, ştiind pe Domnul, nu se roagă,
Pentru el însuşi şi pentru prieteni?
Cu lanț de aur, într-un fel sau altul,
Pământul e legat de tronul Lui.

To the island-valley of *Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And *bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'
So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the *brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, *fluting a wild carol *ere her death,
*Ruffles her pure gold plume, and takes the flood
With *swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Resolving many memories, till the *hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the *mere the *wailing died away.

(in *The Idylls of the King* 308-9)

Rămâi cu bine. Lung e drumul meu
Căci cele trei regine mă vor duce
(Aşa cred – cugetul mi-e îndoit)
În valea insulei din Avalon.
Acolo nu e grindină, nu plouă,
Nu ninge, vântul cât adie lin;
Cuprinsul e-o grădină minunată
Cu peşteri străjuite de verdeață
Şi spuma însoritei mări; acolo
Cumplita rană-mi voi tămădui."

Şi pânzele şi vâslele urniră
De lângă țărm corabia; şi-aceasta
Părea o lebădă care se-nfoaie
Cu penele-i de corb, ia apa-n piept
Şi-şi cântă ultima cântare. Mult
A stat Sir Bedivere, tot depănând
Aducerile-aminte, pân'ce vasul,
Un zbenghi pe cerul zorilor, s-a şters
Şi vaierul nu s-a mai auzit.

[Traducere de Leon Levițchi şi Tudor Dorin, Editura Minerva, București, 1981-1984]

Crossing the Bar

When Tennyson composed this poem, he was a respectful old man in his eighties who had learned a lot from his own life. He wrote it on the back of an envelope as he was on the ferry crossing the Solent, the stretch of water between the mainland and the Isle of Wight where he had established his residence. He saw the crossing on the boat similar to the crossing from this life to the Otherworld. Remarkable is the serenity of the poet who now contemplates death as a natural continuation of life, contrasting strongly with the last image in poems XXII (p. 137) and LVI (p. 138) of In Memoriam. Death, whose symbolism marks this poem, is seen as an unavoidable but natural passage in the cycle of existence.

This is the poem that Tennyson wished that it should be included as the last one, as some sort of epitaph, in every volume of his poetry.

Sunset and evening star,
    And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the *bar,
    When I put to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep
    Too full for sound and foam
When that which drew from one *boundless deep
    Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
    And after that the dark!

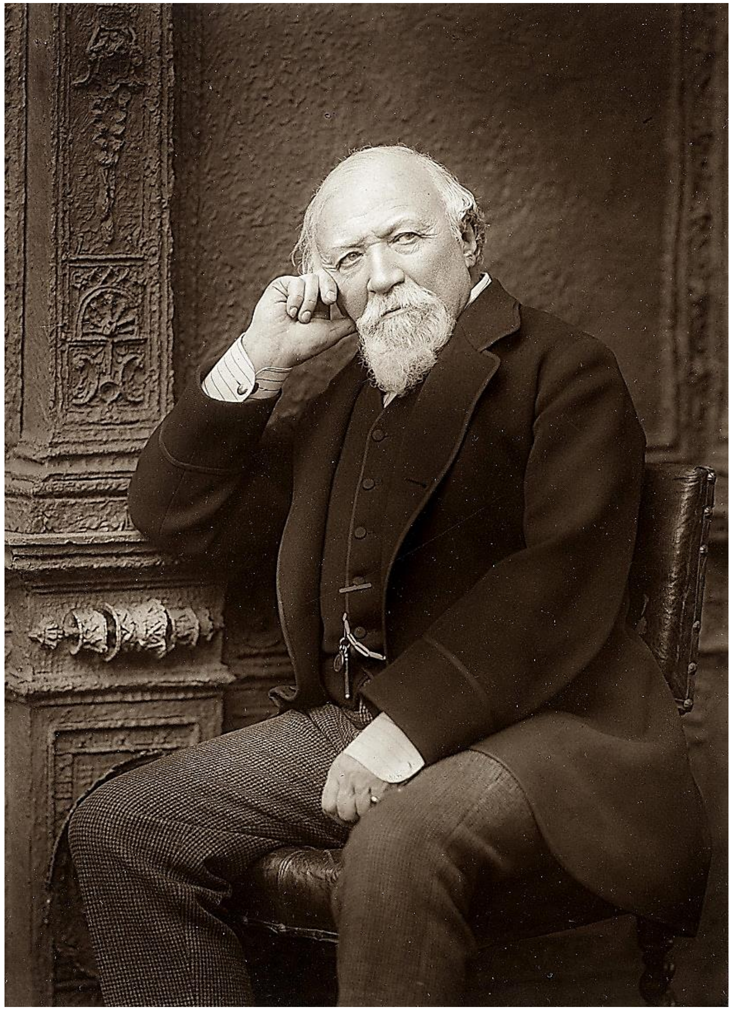
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark.

For though from out the *bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

(in *English Verse 1830-1890* 194, henceforward cited as
English Verse with page numbers)

Robert Browning

(1812-1889)



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Robert Browning (1812-1889) was born in Camberwell, a suburb of London. He did not receive much formal education. He was educated at home where he learnt Greek and Latin at the University of London which he left after half a session.

Browning's first published work, Pauline: A Fragment of a Confession (1833, anonymous), although formally a dramatic monologue, embodied many of his own adolescent passions and anxieties. The result of the fact that he was accused of being too personal was that he decided no longer to confess his own emotions again in his poetry but to write objectively. In 1835 he published *Paracelsus and in 1840 *Sordello. Paracelsus was well received, but Sordello, which made too much appeal to the readers' culture, frightened them away and was almost universally declared incomprehensible. The trip that Browning made to Italy in 1938 to gather material for Sordello was the first one to a country that would fascinate him for the rest of his life.

In 1837 he published Stafford, a drama in verse, followed between 1841 and 1846 by a series of eight pamphlets paid by his father and issued under the general title of Bells and Pomegranates. They included lyric and dramatic pieces, such as the dramatic poem 'Pippa Passes' (No. I, 1841) or the drama 'A Soul's Tragedy' (No. VIII, 1846) and lyrics such as Dramatic Lyrics (No. III, 1842) which contained 'My Last Duchess', 'Porphyria's Lover' and 'Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister' or Dramatic Romances and Lyrics (No. VII, 1845)—poems in which he develops the dramatic monologue. Although Browning enjoyed writing for the stage, he was not successful in the theatre. Consequently he chose to develop his art of creating the dramatic monologues that made him famous.
In 1845 Browning met Elizabeth Barrett and the two soon discovered their love for each other. Although Elizabeth's father did not approve of their relation, they were married secretly in September 1846 and immediately left for Pisa.

Very important for Browning's career and fame was the publication of Men and Women (1855). This was a collection of 51 poems—dramatic lyrics such as 'Memorabilia', 'Love Among the Ruins', 'Child Roland to the Dark Tower Came' and 'A Toccata of Galuppi's', great monologues such as 'Fra Lippo Lippi', 'Andrea del Sarto', 'How It Strikes a Contemporary,' and 'Bishop Blougram's Apology' and very few poems—like 'By the Fireside' or 'One Word More'—in which he broke his rule of not writing personal poetry and spoke of himself and of his love for his wife. Men and Women, however, had no great sale, and many of the reviews were unfavourable and unhelpful.

After the death of Mrs Browning in 1861, Robert Browning returned to London with his young son. His first task, once he was in England, was to prepare his wife's Last Poems for the press. At first he avoided company, but gradually he accepted invitations more freely and began to move in society. When his next book of poems, Dramatis Personae (1864)—including 'Abt Vogler', 'Rabbi Ben Ezra', 'Caliban upon Setebos', and 'Mr. Sludge, The Medium'—reached two editions, it was clear that Browning had at last won a measure of popular recognition.

In 1868-1869 he published what many critics consider his greatest work, The Ring and the Book, based on the proceedings in a murder trial in Rome in 1698. Grand alike in plan and execution, it was at once received with enthusiasm, and Browning was established as one of the most important literary figures of the day.

The most important works of his last years, when he wrote with great fluency, were the long narrative or dramatic poems, often dealing with contemporary themes, such as 'Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau' (1871), 'Fifine at the Fair' (1872), 'Red Cotton Night-Cap Country' (1873), 'The Inn Album' (1875), or starting from classical subjects, such as 'Balaustion's Adventure' (1871) and 'Aristophane's Apology' (1875).

Toward the end of his life he published two books of unusually personal origin—La Saisiaz (1878), an elegy and a meditation on mortality, and Parleyings with Certain People of Importance in Their Day (1887), in which he discussed books and ideas that had influenced him since his youth. He also published two series of Dramatic Idylls (1879 and 1880). The last volume that he published was Asolando (1889) which contained the famous Epilogue: 'At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time'.

While staying in Venice in 1889, Browning caught a severe cold, became seriously ill, and died on 12 December, the day when his last volume was launched. He lies buried in Westminster Abbey.

Robert Browning verses are essentially addressed to the intellect, only seldom are they a means of aesthetic enjoyment.

Robert Browning's remarkable contribution to English and world literature are his dramatic monologues, which he called 'dramatic lyrics' or 'dramatic romances'. According to Cuddon (239-40), in the case of Browning there are basically two kinds of dramatic monologues: soliloquies without an interlocutor (such as in 'Porphyria's Lover' or 'Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister') in which we have a sort of self-revelation of the speaking person and monologues with a silent interlocutor (such as in 'My Last Duchess', 'Fra Lippo Lippi', 'Andrea del Sarto', or 'Caliban upon Setebos') whose reactions are inferred from the words of the speaker. Browning's

dramatic monologues consist essentially of a narrative spoken by a single character caught in a moment of crisis and amplified by his comments on his story and the circumstances (usually dramatic) in which he is speaking.

Unlike Tennyson's, Browning's dramatic monologues do not offer musicality and do not build up an atmosphere or a mood, but they explore character and typology argumentatively, they disclose and investigate a type of distorted psychology; they are a way of looking at life.

'My Last Duchess'

'My Last Duchess', a dramatic monologue included in Dramatic Lyrics (1842), is a macabre gothic tale (Hawlin 68). The speaker in the poem is an Italian Duke who existed in reality as Alfonso II, fifth Duke of Ferrara in 16th century Italy. Now he receives the visit of an emissary from the Count whose 'fair daughter' he intends to marry. He shows this visitor round his palace and invites him upstairs to have a look at the portrait of his deceased first wife. As they read the poem, the readers witness the re-construction of the portrait of the Duchess from the Duke's perspective without really knowing whether she was really frivolous or too friendly. In parallel they gradually become aware of the character of the Duke too: he is an arrogant, possessive and jealous autocrat who considers his wife a possession, an item in his collection of objects of art and to which he only can have access. When she is not up to his expectations, she has to go—I gave commands; / Then all smiles stopped together,' says the Duke. What does this imply? This is a detail deliberately left ambiguous or open for interpretation by the writer—she may have been sent away (maybe to a convent) or he may have had her killed. Only her portrait remains—this is the only way that he can keep her but for himself and forever.

In this case art has replaced real life. The mutability and transience of life is replaced with the immutability and permanence of art. The poem is thus a study of the distorted psychology of a villain (of noble position, though) for whom the portrait of his deceased wife and not herself become an object of obsessive contemplation and pride.

Ferrara

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call

That piece a wonder, now: *Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
*Will't please sit and look at her? I said
'Frà Pandolf' *by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured *countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they *durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 't was not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheeks: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say 'Her mantle *laps
Over my lady's wrist too much,' or 'Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-*flush that dies along her throat': such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
Far calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks sent everywhere.
Sir, 't was all one! My *favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,

The bough of cherries some *officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good! But thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd *stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, 'Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the *mark'—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, *forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, Sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then I repeat,
The Count your master's known *munificence
Is ample warrant that just no pretence

Of mine for dowry will be *disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I *avowed
At starting, is my object. *Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, though a rarity,
Which *Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me.

(in *The Major Works* 101-2)

'Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister'

'Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister' (included in *Dramatic Lyrics*, 1842) is a dramatic monologue in which the speaking voice is a monk, a man supposed to have theological education. He gives expression to his enraged envy and resentment against his fellow, Brother Lawrence, whom he feels to be above him in spirituality and education. Everything he does and all his hatred are directed towards this Brother Lawrence against whom he devises an array of mean stratagems to see him destroyed or damned to perdition. He does not realise that the very sins with which he hopes to damn Lawrence are in fact his own. He would be even capable to gamble on his soul to Satan to eliminate his rival. In this way the poem becomes a genuine catalogue of vices and a receptacle of hatred.

Remarkable in this poem is the language of broken sentences, imprecations and interjections that Browning uses to render the consuming fury of the speaker.

i

G-r-r-r—there go, my heart's abhorrence!
    Water your damn flowerpots, do!
If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,
    God's blood, would not mine kill you!
What? your *myrtle bush wants trimming?
    Oh, that rose has prior claims—
Needs its leaden vase filled brimming?
    Hell dry you up with its flames!

ii

At the meal we sit together:

Salve tibi! I must hear
Wise talk of the kind of weather,
Sort of season, time of year:
Not a plenteous cork crop: scarcely
*Dare we hope oak-*galls, I doubt:*
What's the Latin name for 'parsley'?
What's the Greek name for Swine Snout?

iii

Whew! We'll have our *platter *burnished,
Laid with care on our own shelf!
With a fire-new spoon we're furnished,
And a goblet for ourself,
Rinsed like something sacrificial
Ere, 'tis fit to touch our *chaps—
Marked with L. for our initial!
(He-he! There his lily snaps!)

iv

Saint, *forsooth! While brown Dolores
Squats outside the Convent bank
With Sanchicha, telling stories,
Stepping *tresses in the tank,
Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horsepairs,
—Can't I see his dead eye-glow,
Bright as 'twere a *Barbary corsair's?

(That is, if he'd let it show!)

v

When he finishes *refection,
Knife and fork he never lays
Cross-wise, to my recollection,
As I do, in Jesu's praise.
I the Trinity illustrate,
Drinking watered orange pulp—
In three sips the *Arian frustrate;
While he drains his at one gulp.

vi

Oh, those melons? If he's able
We're to have a feast! so nice!
One goes to the Abbot's table,
All of us get each a slice.
How go on your flowers? None double?
Not one fruit-sort can you spy?
Strange!—And I, too, at such trouble,
Keep them close-nipped on the *sly!

vii

There's a great text in *Galatians,
Once you trip on it, entails
Twenty-nine distinct damnations,
One sure, if another fails:

If I trip him just a-dying,
Sure of heaven as sure can be,
Spin him round and send him flying
Off the Hell! A *Manichee?

viii

Or, my *scrofulous French novel
On grey paper with blunt type!
Simply glance at it, you grovel
Hand and foot in *Belial's gripe:
If I double down its pages
At the woeful sixteenth print,
When he gathers his *greengages,
*Ope a sieve and slip in it?

ix

Or, there's Satan!—one might venture
Pledge one's soul to him, yet leave
Such a flaw in the *indenture
As he'd miss till, past retrieve,
Blasted lay that rose-acacia
We're so proud of! **Hy, Zy, Hine…*
'St, there's Vespers! **Plena gratiâ*
Ave Virgo! G-r-r-r—you swine!

(in *The Major Works* 108-10)

'Porphyria's Lover'

This dramatic monologue, is a soliloquy included in *Dramatic Lyrics* (1842), another study of distorted psychology in which female desire is the cause that brings about the final and tragic effect (Pearsall 79). Like many monologues written by Browning, it deals with a moment of crisis in the life of the protagonist, a man (identified as Porphyria's lover) who reveals a dramatic episode in his love for Porphyria. The text is quite ambiguous as the reader's source of information is one perspective only, namely that of the speaker—Porphyria's lover. The questions that naturally arise and which are left at the discretion of the reader refer to the nature of Porphyria's relationship with the man, about where she was before she returns during the rainy night and what actually happened to Porphyria: did she get killed or is it all the product of the man's raving imagination? Questions to which the readers have to provide answers, because, as in many cases with Browning, these are semantic gaps left open for interpretation.

The protagonist in his obsessive possessiveness is quite similar to the Duke of Ferrara, as for him death seems to be the only solution to immortalise his almost hysterical love. The last line in the poem: 'And yet God has not said a word!' is a direct challenge to the very existence of God; as such, it echoes the crisis of belief of the age. It may also hint that the protagonist has conceived everything as a sort of game played with God, to make Him reveal His existence. Alternatively, if everything has been imagined by the speaker, then God has completely withdrawn, since 'God cannot intervene in imaginary time'. (Armstrong 141).

The rain set early in tonight
The sullen wind was soon awake,
It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
And did its worst to vex the lake:
I listened with heart fit to break.
When glided in Porphyria; straight
She shut the cold out and the storm,

And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;
Which done, she rose, and from her form
Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,
And laid her soiled gloves by, untied
Her hat and let the damp hair fall,
And, last, she sat down by my side
And called me. When no voice replied,
She put my arm about her waist,
And made her smooth white shoulder bare,
And all her yellow hair displaced,
And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,
And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair,
Murmuring how she loved me—she
Too weak for all her heart's endeavour,
To set its struggling passion free
From pride, and vainer ties dissever,
And give herself to me forever.
But passion sometimes would prevail,
Nor could tonight's gay feast restrain
A sudden thought of one so pale
For love of her, and all in vain:
So she was come through wind and rain.
Be sure I looked up at her eyes

Happy and proud; at last I knew
Porphyria worshipped me; surprise
Made my heart swell, and still it grew
While I debated what to do.
The moment she was mine, mine, fair
Perfectly pure and good: I found
A thing to do, and all her hair
In one long yellow string I wound
Three times her little throat around
And strangled her. No pain felt she;
I am quite sure she felt no pain.
As a shut bud that holds a bee,
I warily opened her lids: again
And I untightened next the tress
About her neck; her cheek once more
Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:
I propped her head up as before,
Only, this time my shoulder bore
Her head, which droops upon it still:
The smiling rosy little head,
So glad it has its utmost will,
That all it scorned at once is fled,
And I, its love, am gained instead!
Porphyria's love: she guessed not how

Her darling one wish would be heard.
And thus we sit together now,
And all night long we have not stirred,
And yet God has not said a word!

(in *The Major Works* 122-4)

From 'Fra Lippo Lippi'

'Fra Lippo Lippi' narrates the life of the Florentine Renaissance painter monk Fra Lippo Lippi (who lived in Italy in the fifteenth century and is mentioned in Giorgio Vassari's book *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, from which Browning extracted his information about the painter): how he entered a convent of the Carmelite order and how his talent for painting was discovered and he learnt his craft to paint the church. But Fra Lippo Lippi is not only a monk as he is also a man with a keen eye for the beauty of the opposite sex. In fact, at the beginning of the poem he is caught by the Florence watchmen as he sneaks out of a house of 'sportive ladies' after curfew time. The poem is thus the monologue that he utters in his defence and in which he discloses his way of perceiving the craft of painting. For him, the beautiful human body of children, men and women alike, with its fleshy forms, provides a model for the saints to be painted, instead of the ascetic and formless shapes that appeared in canonized religious paintings. This is, actually, one of the innovative techniques of painting that set the movement of the Renaissance against the medieval religious dogma.

The monologue contains not only a portrait of the Florentine painter but also a debate about the sacred and the profane, clerics and laymen, devout and worldly practices, art and religion or, as Hawlin underlines (180), about what is meant by Christian art or the extent to which religion can co-exist with (true) art.

Paint the Soul

*Fra Lippo Lippi is an adept of the late Renaissance principles of representing the human body using normal, ordinary people as model for holy figures. Consequently, his way of painting cannot be accepted by the church elders who try to discipline the stray painter and recommend him to paint according to an idealistic and didactic religious cannon laid out by *Giotto. According to the ecclesiastical authorities, what is to be*

represented is the soul and not the perishable body – Paint the soul, never mind the legs and arms!,' they say.

Your business is not to catch men with show,
With homage to the perishable clay,
But lift them over it, ignore it all,
Make them forget there's such a thing as flesh.
Your business is to paint the souls of men—
Man's soul, and it's a fire, smoke… no, it's not…
It's vapour done up like a new-born babe—
(In that shape when you die it leaves your mouth)
It's… well, what matters talking, it's the soul!
Give us no more of body than shows soul!
Here's Giotto, with his Saint a-praising God,
That sets us praising—why not stop with him?
Why put all thoughts of praise out of our head
With wonder at lines, colours, and what not?
Paint the soul, never mind the legs and arms!

(in *The Major Works* 178-9)

Dator eşti nu să-i ispiteşti pe oameni
Cu ceea ce-i părelnic, aducând
Ţărânii stricătoare-nchinăciune,
Ci să-i înalți deasupra-i, s-o înlături,
Să-i faci să uite că există carnea.
Dator eşti sufletul să-l zugrăveşti,
Iar sufletul e foc, e fum... nu, nu e...
E abur ce se naşte ca un prunc
(La moarte astfel părăseşte gura),
E... n-are rost să mai vorbim, e... suflet!
Să nu ne dărui mai mult trup decât
Arată sufletul! Uite-l pe Giotto
Cu Sfântul său ce-l laudă pe Domnul
Şi te îmbie să-L slăveşti şi tu—
Opreşte-te la el! De ce să scoți
Din mintea noastră orce gând de slavă,
Uimindu-ne cu linii şi culori?
Pictează sufletul şi lasă-ncolo
Picioarele şi brațele!

[Traducere de Leon D. Levițchi. Editura Univers Poesis, Bucureşti 1972]

Iste perfecit opus

It is against such ecclesiastical counsels as those mentioned above that Fra Lippo Lippi 'fiendishly' devises his future painting of the church of Saint Ambrogio (a church which really exists in a nunnery in Florence). There was a picture in it called Coronation of the Virgin – now in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence – assigned to Fra Lippo Lippi. He plans to paint his own worldly and fleshy portrait in a select representation of saints, thus intruding upon a sacred assembly of holy faces.

Give me six months, then go, see
Something in Sant' Ambrogio's! Bless the nuns!
They want a cast o' my *office. I shall paint
God in the midst, Madonna and her babe,
Ringed by a *bowery, flowery *angel-brood,
Lilies and vestments and white faces, sweet
As *puff on puff of *grated *orris-root
When ladies crowd to Church at midsummer.
And then i' the front, of course a saint or two –
*Saint John' because he saves the Florentines,
*Saint Ambrose, who puts down in black and white
The convent's friends and gives them a long day,
And *Job, I must have him there past mistake,
The man of *Uz (and Us without the z,
Painters who need his patience). Well, all these
Secured at their devotion, up shall come

Dă-mi şase luni, apoi să mergi să vezi
Ceva la Sant 'Ambrogio. Trăiască
Măicuțele! Doresc să mă-mprumute...
Am să-l pictez pe Dumnezeu la mijloc,
Pe prunc şi Precista înconjurați
De-nghirlăndate cete îngereşti,
Crini, straie albe, chipuri durdulii
Ca bulbii crinilor atunci când doamne
Se scurg în miezul verii spre capelă.
În față, negreşit, vreo doi-trei sfinți:
Ioan (căci i-a scăpat pe florentini),
Ambrozie (căci trece-n catastif
Pe toți cei ce-s prieteni mănăstirii)
Şi Iov (căci nu se poate fără dânsul,
Răbdarea lui e bună pentru pictori).
Ei bine, dintr-un colț, când toți aceştia

Out of a corner when you least expect,
As one by a dark stair into a great light,
Music and talking, who but Lippo! I!—
Mazed, motionless, and moonstruck—I'm the man!
Back I shrink—what is this I see and hear?
I, caught up with my monk's-things by mistake,
My old *serge gown and rope that goes all round,
I, in this presence, this pure company!
Where's a hole, where's a corner for escape?
Then steps a sweet angelic slip of a thing
Forward, puts out a soft palm—Not so fast!'
—Addresses the celestial presence, 'nay—
He made you and devised you, after all,
Though he's none of you! Could Saint John there draw—
His *camel-hair make up a painting brush?
We come to brother Lippo for all that,
*Iste perfecit opus! So, all smile—
I shuffle sideways with my blushing face
Under the cover of a hundred wings
Thrown like a spread of *kirtles when you're gay
And play hot *cockles, all the doors being shut,
Till, wholly unexpected, in there pops
The hothead husband! Thus I *scuttle off
To some safe bench behind, not letting go

Se roagă-adânc, o dată, mări, azvârle,
Ca dintr-un şopru dosnic spre lumină,
Cântări şi vorbe, cine? Lippo! eu!
Uimit, înnebunit, trăsnit—sunt eu!
Mă trag în spate—tii, ce văd? ce-aud?
Păi de, m-am nimerit cu ale mele—
Sutana roasă, brâul de frânghie—
În sânul preacuratului sobor!
O gaură de şarpe ca să scap!
Eu mă strecor, sfielnic, într-o parte,
Sub scutul áripelor ridicate
Asemeni fustelor la joc de cărți,
Cind, zăvorâte uşile fiind,
Apare, din senin, cumplit, bărbatul!
Eu, dar, mă trag spre-o bancă mai din fund,
Dar nu las din strânsoare mâna, crinul
Acelei care-a pus o vorbă bună,
La timp, pentru nevrednicul de mine,
Santa Lucia—ca nepoata popii...
Scăpat-am, deci, şi sfânt lăcaşu-acela
S-a fost ales cu un tablou măreț.
De azi în şase luni. Dă-mi mâna, dom'le,
Şi... bun rămas. Fără lumină, zău!
Pe stradă-i linişte şi, nu te mint,

The palm of her, the little lily thing
That spoke the good word for me in the *nick,
Like the Prior's niece… Saint Lucy, I would say.
And so all's saved for me, and for the church
A pretty picture gained. Go, six months hence!
Your hand, sir, and good-bye: no lights, no lights!
The street's hushed, and I know my own way back,
Don't fear me! There's the grey beginning. *Zooks!

(in *The Major Works* 182-3)

Ştiu drumul îndărăt. Te-ncrede-n mine!
Se-arată surul zorilor... Ptiu, drace!

[Traducere de Leon D. Levițchi. Editura Univers Poesis, București 1972]

From ‘Andrea del Sarto‘

‘Andrea del Sarto’ (included in *Men and Women*, 1855) is another poem (dramatic monologue) about a real painter, Andrea del Sarto, called ‘The Faultless Painter’, who lived most of his life in sixteenth century Italy. His life is also presented in *The Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects* by Giorgio Vassari, as a life of a man of great talent who could not find fulfilment in his art of church painting. In a monologue uttered in front of his wife, Lucrezia, he recounts the frustrations—or the faults—of his life: his failure as an artist (his unsuccessful Madonnas are, in fact, portraits of his wife), his inferiority to Raphael, his disloyalty to his patron, Francis I, his incapacity to rise to the expectations of his wife. Contrary tot this, she appears to be unworthy of him and his total devotion to her is regarded as a potential cause of his artistic failure. His tone is that of a resigned man who hopes naively that in the New Jerusalem, there will be a church left for him to decorate, together with the great masters of the Italian Renaissance—Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael.

As Hawlin argues (87), the poem turns into an analysis of the artistic failure of a man who has refrained from the fullness of life and, consequently, has not known the passion and spirituality associated with it. What ensues is a grave debate about (extra)marital relations, creativity and art.

My Serpentining Beauty

The lines below are extracted from the first part of the poem when Andrea del Sarto appears talking to his wife Lucrezia.

But do not let us quarrel any more,
No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:
Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.
You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?
I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,
Treat his own subject after his own way,
Fix his own time, accept too his own price,
And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?
Oh, I'll content him,—but to-morrow, Love!
I often am much wearier than you think,
This evening more than usual, and it seems
As if—forgive now—should you let me sit
Here by the window with your hand in mine
And look a half-hour forth on *Fiesole,
Both of one mind, as married people use,
Quietly, quietly the evening through,
I might get up to-morrow to my work
Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
To-morrow, how you shall be glad for this!
Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.
Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve
For each of the five pictures we require:

Lucreția, să nu ne mai certăm.
Mă rabdă-aşa cum sunt, măcar o dată.
Stai jos—şi vor fi toate cum doreşti.
'Ți-ntorni obrazul; inima aşijderi?
Prietenul prietenului tău
Nu va avea temeiuri să se plângă;
Nici eu n-am să mă plâng de oboseală.
Am să-i pictez subiectul cum vrea el,
Când vrea, la prețul lui, şi banii—banii
În mâna asta mică am să-i pun
De cum o să se lase într-a mea.
O să se lase? Gingaş? O să-i placă!
Nu mai departe decât mâine, scumpo.
Ades sunt mai trudit decât socoți;
Mai mult decât oricând în astă seară;
Şi mă gândesc—te rog să nu te superi—
Că dacă m-ai lăsa să stau aici,
La geam, cu mâna prinsă-ntr-ale tale
Şi ne-am uita la Fiesole-un ceas,
Ca soțul cu soția, gând la gând,
Alene-alene, cât se scurge seara,
M-aş apuca de lucru mâine-n zori
Înveselit şi proaspăt. Să-ncercăm.
Ti se va umple inima, nu alta!

It saves a model. So! keep looking so—
My *serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds!
—How could you ever prick those perfect ears,
Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet—
My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
Which everybody looks on and calls his,
And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
While she looks—no one's: very dear, no less.
You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,
There's what we painters call our harmony!
A common greyness silvers everything,—
All in a twilight, you and I alike
—You, at the point of your first pride in me
(That's gone you know),—but I, at every point;
My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down
To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.
There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;
That length of convent-wall across the way
Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;
The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,
And autumn grows, autumn in everything.
Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape
As if I saw alike my work and self
And all that I was born to be and do,

Femeie-aievea-ți este mâna moale
Şi-a mea, precum e pieptul de bărbat,
La care se-aciuează. Dar de ce
Să pierdem vremea—dacă vrei să-mi fii
Model la toate cele cinci tablouri.
Aşa… Nu te mişca! Şerpească vrajă
Cu nuri rotunzi! Cum de-ai putut străpunge
Aceste nentrecute urechiuşe
Ca să agăți de ele câte-o perlă?
O, dulce chipul meu, o, luna mea,
A mea şi-a tuturor, spre care toți
Se uită şi îşi spun că este-a lor,
Şi-n timp ce e privită şi priveşte,
Nu este-a nimănui—şi-i, totuşi, scumpă!
Zâmbeşti? Tablou-i gata. Noi, artiştii,
Numim aceasta armonia noastră!
O pâclă sură arginteazǎ tot—
Amurgul ne-nfăşoară pe-amândoi—
Pe tine-n clipa când m-ai prețuit
(A fost cândva!), pe mine fără preget;
Speranța, tinerețea, arta mea
Sunt pastelate blând ca Fiesole.
Se bate clopotul în paraclis;
Pereții mănăstirii, peste drum,

A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.

(in *The Major Works* 240-1)

Țin pomii mai la adăpost, mănunchi;
Din curte pleacă ultimul călugăr;
Descreşte ziua, toamna prinde spor
În lung şi-n lat. Tot, munca mea, eu însumi,
Ce rost mi-a fost menit când m-am născut
Îmi par ca un tablou al înserării.
Ne-aflăm în mâna Domnului, iubito.

[Traducere de Leon D. Levițchi. Editura Univers Poesis, București 1972]

From 'Caliban upon Setebos'

The poem has 'Natural Theology in the Island' as its subtitle. It is a poem about man's condition in this world and it reflects the controversies of the epoch caused by the Darwinian theory about the origin of man, the nature of God and man's relation to his Creator. The poem was also generated by the debates on the existence of evil and suffering in this world and God's responsibility in this respect as well as by the Calvinist idea of predestination.

The speaker is Caliban, Shakespeare's Caliban of *The Tempest*, Prospero's slave, a creature half beast and half human. The poem reflects in a grotesque way the 'philosophy' of this primitive creature. Caliban's God is Setebos, a mere projection of himself, inferred or 'derived' from the reality of his own island. Caliban believes that his God lives in the 'cold of the moon' and considers him inconsequential, jealous and obstinate just like himself. Caliban's act of creation is imagined in terms strictly limited to his own small, narrow world and as the result of his faulty experience and primitive emotional state.

Caliban Thinketh

One warm day when everything around is quiet, Caliban decides to find a sheltered place to think of his God called Setebos. In order to be able to do that he decides to hide 'in the pit's much mire' for fear of being overheard and punished by Setebos.
When referring to himself, Caliban uses the third or the first person singular, interchangeably – hoping to be able to conceal thus his thoughts – and 'He' when alluding to Setebos.

'Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself.'	„Socoteai că sunt întru totul asemeni ție”
['Will sprawl, now that the heat of day is best,	[E pârga zilei – vrea să se întindă

Flat on his belly in the pit's much mire,
With elbows wide, fists clenched to prop his chin.
And, while he kicks both feet in the cool slush,
And feels about his spine small *elf-things course,
Run in and out each arm, and make him laugh:
And while above his head a *pompion-plant,
Coating the cave-top as a brow its eye,
Creeps down to touch and tickle hair and beard,
And now a flower drops with a bee inside,
And now a fruit to snap at, catch and crunch,—
He looks out o'er yon sea which sunbeams cross
And recross till they weave a spider-web
(Meshes of fire, some great fish breaks at times)
And talks to his own self, howe'er he please,
Touching that other, whom his *dam called God.
Because to talk about Him, vexes—ha,
Could He but know! and time to vex is now,
When talk is safer than in winter-time.
Moreover *Prosper and *Miranda sleep
In confidence he *drudges at their task,
And it is good to cheat the pair, and *gibe,
Letting the rank tongue blossom into speech.]

(in *The Major Works* 328-9)

Pe pântec în al ştioalnei mâl stătut,
Cu coatele răsfrânte, pumnii strânşi
Proptindu-i fălcile; bălăcăreşte
Cu ambele picioare-n mâzga rece
Şi-l gâdil' salamandrele ce-i fug,
În sus şi-n jos, pe brațe şi spinare.
Deasupra-i crizanteme se boltesc
Ca peste ochi sprâncenele; verdeața
Se trage-n jos, i-atinge părul, barba;
Din boltă se desprinde, când şi când,
O floare cu-o albină în potir
Sau câte-o poamă bună de mâncat.
El cată înspre marea unde-atâtea
Se-ncrucişează-a soarelui luciri
Că țes păienjeniş (ochiuri-văpăi
Ce le destramă peştii săritori)
Şi-n limba lui cu sine stă de vorbă
Despre acel pe care maica lui
Îl botezase Dumnezeu. Căci, de!
Supărător e să vorbeşti de Dânsul.
Ha! Dânsul dac-ar şti! acum e vremea
Întărâtărilor, acum când vorba
E mai ferită ca în toiul iernii...
Mai pui că Prosper şi Miranda dorm,

Crezând că el trudeşte pentru dânşii;
Şi e plăcut să înşeli şi să-ţi baţi joc,
Pe limba-ţi rea să încolţească vorba.]

[Traducere de Leon D. Levițchi. Editura Univers Poesis, București 1972]

Cosmogony According to Caliban

As Caliban sees it, the act of creation attributed to Setebos is not the result of a responsible and conscious attitude. As inferred from the passage underneath, it is rather the result of a mood, a whim, a state of health or just the result of a way of seeing things or thinking similar to his.

Setebos, Setebos, and Setebos!
'Thinketh, He dwelleth i' the cold o' the moon.

'Thinketh He made it, with the sun to match,
But not the stars; the stars came otherwise;
Only made clouds, winds, meteors, such as that:
Also this isle, what lives and grows thereon,
And snaky sea which rounds and ends the same.

'Thinketh, it came of being ill at ease:
He hated that He cannot change His cold,
Nor cure its ache. 'Hath spied an icy fish
That longed to 'scape the rock-stream where she lived,
And *thaw herself within the lukewarm *brine
O' the lazy sea her stream thrusts far amid,
A crystal *spike 'twixt two warm walls of wave;
Only, she ever sickened, found repulse
At the other kind of water, not her life,

Sétebos, Setébos şi Setebós!
Socoate că trăieşte-n frigul lunii;

Socoate c-a facut-o împreună
Cu soarele; dar stelele, nicicum;
Acestea au venit altminteri;
Dânsul? Doar norii, vânturile, meteorii;
Şi insula, cu ce e viu pe ea;
Şi marea ce-o înconjură, solzoasă.

Socoate c-a născut din supărare.
Era înverşunat că nu putea
Să-nfrângă frigul şi să lecuiască
Durerea ce-o stârneşte. A văzut
Un peşte rebegit care dorea
Să scape din şuvoiul dintre stânci,
Să se dezgheţe-n calda saramură
A mării leneşe ce-l înghiţea—

(Green-dense and dim-delicious, bred o' the sun)
*Flounced back from bliss she was not born to breath,
And in her old bounds buried her despair,
Hating and loving warmth alike: so He.

'Thinketh, He made thereat the sun, this isle,
Trees and the fowls here, beast and creeping thing.
[…] He made all these and more,
Made all we see, and us, in spite: how else?
He could not, Himself, make a second self
To be His mate; as well have made Himself:
He would not make what He mislikes or *slights,
An eyesore to Him, or not worth His pains:
But did, in envy, *listlessness or sport,
Make what Himself would *fain, in a manner, be—
Weaker in most points, stronger in a few,
Worthy, and yet mere playthings all the while,
Things He admires and mocks too,—that is it.

(in *The Major Works* 329-30)

O lance de cristal în valul cald.
Dar peştele-a tânjit, nu s-a-mpăcat
Cu-această apă, altfel întocmită
(Dens-verde,-ntunecos-încântătoare,
Crescută-n raze) şi s-a-ntors din raiul
În care nu putea să viețuiască
Şi-n vechile-i hotare şi-a-ngropat
Cumplita desperare, deopotrivă
Urând căldura şi iubind-o. El!

Socoate, iar, că Dânsul a făcut
Şi soarele şi insula aceasta,
Jivina, zburătoarea, pomul, broasca,

[…]

Pe-acestea le-a zidit şi multe alte,
Tot ce vedem; pe noi—nu la mânie?
N-ar fi putut să-şi facă un alt eu
Spre-a-i fi tovarăş, cum n-ar fi putut
Să se creeze singur. N-a vroit
Să facă ce nu-i place sau desfide,
O urâciune ce nu merita
Strădaniile Sale. A zidit

Ce Însuşi El, cumva, a vrut să fie,
Mai slab în multe cele, mai puternic
În altele, puține, mai destoinic—
Dar toate nişte biete jucării
Cât o să țină veşnicia, lucruri
Pe cari le-admiră şi le ia în râs.

[Traducere de Leon D. Levițchi. Editura Univers Poesis, București 1972]

Yonder Crabs

Setebos is a whimsical entity driven by power and not by kindness or justice. As such, those who are saved or who are doomed to suffer are selected at random and Caliban's God behaves towards those inferior to him just like Caliban does towards 'yonder crabs' as seen in the second part of the extract below. These lines reflect the idea of predestination and prevalence of the accidental or the aleatory.

'Thinketh, such shows nor right nor wrong in Him,
Nor kind, nor cruel: He is strong and Lord.
'Am strong myself compared to *yonder crabs
That march now from the mountain to the sea;
'Let twenty pass, and stone the twenty-first,
Loving not, hating not, just choosing so.
'Say, the first *straggler that boasts purple spots
Shall join the file, one *pincer twisted off;
'Say, this bruised fellow shall receive a worm,
And two worms he whose *nippers end in red;
As it likes me each time, I do: so He.

(in *The Major Works* 331)

Socoate că la El nimic nu este
Nici drept, nici strâmb, nici bun, nici crud; fiindcă
Puternic e şi Domn. Şi eu sunt tare
Pe lângă racii ce coboară-acum
Din munte către apă. Douăzeci
O să lăsăm să treacă şi cu piatra
Îl vom zdreli pe cel ce vine-apoi,
Făr-a iubi, făr-a urî,-ntr-o doară.
Să spunem că întâiul răzlețit
Cu urme purpurii şi-un cleşte lipsă
Se-adaugă celorlalți; şi, iarăşi,
Că-acest beteag va căpăta o râmă
Şi două râme cel ai cărui cleşti
Au capetele înroşite.—Aceasta
Îmi este pururi voia.—A grăit.

[Traducere de Leon D. Levițchi. Editura Univers Poesis, București 1972

Epilogue to *Asolando*

Asolando *is the last collection of poetry that Robert Browning wrote and finished in 1889 a short time before his death. In fact, he died on the same day that this volume was published after a short final illness in his son's beautiful palazzo on the Canal Grande in Venice (Hawlin 40, 205). In the volume's Epilogue, reproduced below, the poet describes himself as a proud but realistic, dignified man who draws a line and sums up. The substance of the poem is a sincere looking back in time and a delineation of a way of life with good and bad moments, always surpassed with self-conscience and distinction, and a glance at the inevitable that is to come. In this last reflection the poem bears similarities with Alfred Tennyson's 'Crossing the Bar'.*

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,
When you set your fancies free,
Will they pass to where—by death, fools think, imprisoned—
Low he lies who once so loved you whom you loved so,
—Pity me?

Oh, to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!
What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?
Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I *drivel
—Being—who?

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,

Never dreamed, tho' right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed,—fight on, fare ever
There as here!"

(in *The Major Works* 570)

Matthew Arnold

(1822-1888)



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Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) was born in Laleham, Middlesex, as the son of Thomas Arnold, historian and headmaster of Rugby. He was educated at Rugby and Balliol College Oxford. There his early poems were well received and he won a prize for them.

After graduating, from 1851 onwards, he became an inspector of schools, a job that he held for the next thirty-five years. This job implied travelling a lot around the country and visiting schools and becoming thus familiar with the English system of education and its problems, among which the appalling living conditions of many of the school-children and their parents.

He first volume of poetry was *The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems* (1849), followed by *Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems* (1852), two volumes of *Poems* (1853-1855), and a re-edition of his poems, *New Poems* (1867), with a few additions.

He married in 1851 and had six children, of whom three died before their father. In 1858 he was appointed professor at the chair of poetry at Oxford, but he did not abandon his job as a school inspector. The result was, besides his teaching activity, the publication of several volumes of literary criticism: *On Translating Homer* (1861), *Essays in Criticism* (1865) and *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867).

The last part of his life was dedicated to the criticism of his society and its educational, social, cultural and religious problems. In this respect, he published *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), *St. Paul and Protestantism* (1870), *Literature and Dogma* (1873) and *God and the Bible* (1875) in which he contested the nineteenth century materialism in England and its isolationism.

Arnold died suddenly, of heart failure, at Liverpool in the spring of 1888, and was buried at Laleham.

Matthew Arnold deplored Victorian Utilitarianism and its consequences—unimaginative materialism and its ugliness. He believed that middle classes represented the hope for civilisation if they were properly educated. Therefore one of the most important points of his activity was to educate them. In this respect he was in favour of an adequate literary culture in the society. He remains in literature for the eloquence of his essays and criticism and the sincere touches of meditation and nostalgia in his poems.

'Dover Beach'

Faleza Doverului

This poem, one of Arnold's best-known ones, pictures a sort of 'Victorian wasteland' (Dahl 53) characterised by loss of religious faith and public values. However, not everything is gone—but what is left is rather private affections, the little society of love and friendship. The poet feels isolated from the intellectual and moral standards of his time. The great ages are gone and those of the future are not yet visible. Faith is lost and the present days are filled with 'a strange disease'. Nevertheless, the vision is not altogether pessimistic, since, though he is saddened by what surrounds him, he also knows that there is still hope. Although, the loss of faith means that the universe or the Gods do not really care about human values and needs, those values that cannot be found elsewhere are to be sought in human, brotherly love, to which the poet makes appeal.

Arnold's position is different from Tennyson's—he does not consider himself a combatant (Dahl 37), he is rather an observer with a nostalgic but detached vision; this is the only way to hope.

The sea is calm tonight
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits;—on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the windows—sweet is the night air
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the *moon-blanch'd land

Listen! You hear the *grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back and fling

În seara asta marea-i calmă.
E flux şi luna a-mbrăcat strâmtoarea
În strai bogat; pe țărmul Franței,
Lumina licăreşte şi se stinge;
Faleza Angliei se-nalță clar,
Aprinsă, vastă,-n golful liniştit.
Vin ´ la fereastră, aerul e blând!
Doar dinspre franjul spumei unde marea
Atinge malul argintat de lună
Se-aude hârşâitul ce îl face
Pietrişul smuls de valuri şi din nou

At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

*Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the *Aegaean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid *ebb and flow
Of human misery, we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle *furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked *shingles of the world.

Ah, love let us be true,
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,

Zvârlit pe țărm, un veşnic du-te-vino
În ritm încet şi larg ce sugerează
Pe țărmul egean, Sofocle –
Sunt mii de ani de-atunci – l-a ascultat
Şi s-a gândit la fluxul şi refluxul
Mizeriei umane; noi
Găsim ecoul cugetării sale
Când ascultăm aceste mări din nord.

Şi Mările Credinței
Erau cândva în flux şi-ntreg uscatul
Îl încingeau cu scumpă cingătoare
Acum aud
Doar vuietul lor trist ce se retrage
În urletul furtunilor de noapte
Spre marginile-acestui veac.
Iubito, unul altul să ne fim
Tari în credință! Lumea-n fața noastră
Se-tinde ca un țărm de vis – e nouă,
Frumoasă, felurită; dar, de fapt,
Nu ştie tihnă, dragoste, lumină,
Convingeri, fericire, ajutor
În ceasul suferinței; stăm aici
Ca pe un câmp al soarelui-apune

So various, so beautiful, so new,
*Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a *darkling plain
Sweep with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where *ignorant armies clash by night.

(in *English Verse* 703)

Surzit de corni şi tobe, unde, noaptea,
Se-ncaieră neştiutoare oşti.

[Traducere de Leon Leviţchi şi Tudor Dorin, Editura Minerva, Bucureşti, 1981-1984]

From 'The Scholar Gipsy'

'The Scholar Gipsy' is a pastoral idyll, a nostalgic meditation on a dead age and dead friend (Lucas 60). It was inspired by the poet's youth at Oxford and his walks in the surrounding countryside and has at its centre the classic figure of the Oxford student who joined some vagrant gipsies, hoping to learn the secret of possessing mesmerising powers. As Macsiniuc points out (111), a possible reading of the poem is that of a meditation on the poet's condition in modern times.

The whole landscape is filled with a distinct Keatsian sensuousness and charm, which suggests Arnold's longing for freshness and spontaneity. Arnold sees the world that the scholar-gipsy encounters with a nostalgic eye as a world of Romantic freedom surrounded by the mystery of the unknown and the unfamiliar. The beauty and the peacefulness of the countryside are set in contrast with the 'strange disease of modern life' with the narrow-mindedness and loss of faith and human values of his age. A temporary refuge from them is to be sought in the 'natural magic' of the idyllic countryside.

The Oxford Countryside

The text below reproduces the first three stanzas of the poem. Remarkable besides the bucolic scenery of neo-classical beauty is Arnold's choice of words and prosodic virtuosity, his 'magnificence of language and metre alike' (Lucas 60).

Go, for they call you, Shepherd, from the hill;
    Go, Shepherd, and untie the *wattled *cotes:
        No longer leave thy *wistful flock unfed,
    Nor let thy *bawling fellows rack their throats,

Nor the cropp'd grasses shoot another head.
But when the fields are still,
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanch'd green;
Come Shepherd, and again begin the quest.

Here, where the reaper was at work of late—
In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
His coat, his basket, and his earthen *cruse,
And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,
Then, there, at noon, comes back his stores to use—

Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the corn—
All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screen'd in this *nook o'er the high, half-reap't field,
And there till sun-down, shepherd! will I be.
Through the thick corn scarlet poppies peep,
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale pink *convolvulus in tendrils creep;

And air-swept *lindens yield

Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom and the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August sun with shade;
And the eye travels down to Oxford towers.

(in *Selected Poems and Prose* 108)

From *Culture and Anarchy*

In *Culture and Anarchy* Arnold investigates Victorian Britain and finds that it is heading towards anarchy and that no-one has any concern for public good. Arnold's solution for this prevalent anarchy is culture, as the study of perfection. He argues that Britain was in a deplorable state because of the predominance of Hebraism—the moral conscience which is obsessed with thoughts of sin' (Chew and Altick 1414), the strictness of conscience, the total devotion to work and too rigid Puritan morality—over Hellenism—the illuminated mind which sees things as they really are' (Chew and Altick 1414), the spontaneity of conscience, the openness of mind, the cultivation of the aesthetic and the intellectual understanding of life, fidelity to nature as it appears in Greek art. This is wrong because in such vision of life there is too little place for Hellenism, i.e. inadequate interest in the aesthetic and intellectual sides of life. In his view, what his contemporaries should do is to devote more of their lives to culture so as to make Hellenism preponderate.

In the context of his analysis Arnold classifies English society, rather ironically, into *Barbarians* (the aristocracy, with its high spirit, serenity, and distinguished manners, their inaccessibility to ideas and their orientation toward outward culture), *Philistines* (the middle class, the stronghold of religious nonconformity, with plenty of energy and morality but insufficient sweetness and light), and *Populace* (the lower classes, the working classes still raw and blind, not totally lost but lacking the power of action).

He saw in the Philistines the key to the whole position and a possible source of salvation since, in spite of their negative traits, Arnold considers them as the only ones capable of salvation through education—educate and humanise the Philistines', was Arnold's credo.

Sweetness and Light

The following extract is taken from Chapter 1: 'Sweetness and Light', in which Arnold speaks about the necessity to attain a high level of intellectual and artistic cultivation, namely Hellenism, which he associates with 'sweetness and light' or respect for beauty and intellect.

The pursuit of perfection, then, is the pursuit of sweetness and light. He who works for sweetness works in the end for light also; he who works for light works in the end for sweetness also. But he who works for sweetness and light united, works to make reason and the will of God prevail. He who works for machinery, he who works for hatred, works only for confusion. Culture looks beyond machinery, culture hates hatred; culture has but one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light. Yes, it has one yet greater! — the passion for making them prevail. It is not satisfied till we all come to a perfect man; it knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and *unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light. If I have not *shrunk from saying that we must work for sweetness and light, so neither have I shrunk from saying that we must have a broad basis, must have sweetness and light for as many as possible. Again and again I have insisted how those are the happy moments of humanity, how those are the marking epochs of a people's life, how those are the flowering times for literature and art and all the creative power of genius, when there is a national glow of life and thought, when the whole of society is in the fullest measure permeated by thought, sensible to beauty, intelligent and alive. Only it must be real thought and real beauty; real sweetness and real light. Plenty of people will try to give the masses, as they call them, an intellectual food prepared and adapted in the way they think proper for the actual condition of the masses. The ordinary popular literature is an example of this way of working on the masses. Plenty of people will try to indoctrinate the masses with the set of ideas and judgements constituting the creed of their own profession or party. Our religious and political organisations give an example of this way of working on the masses. I condemn neither way; but culture works differently. It does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes; it does not try to win them for this or that sect of its own, with ready-made judgements

and watchwords. It seeks to do away with classes; to make all live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, and use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely,—to be nourished and not bound by them.

(in *Longman Anthology* 1697)

Hellenism and Hebraism

The extract below is from Chapter 5: 'Hebraism and Hellenism' in which Arnold explains his concepts of Hebraism and Hellenism.

I said we show, as a nation, laudable energy and persistence in walking according to the best light we have, but are not quite careful enough, perhaps, to see that our light be not darkness. This is only another version of the old story that energy is our strong point and favourable characteristic, rather than intelligence. But we may give to this idea a more general form still, in which it will have a yet larger range of application. We may regard this energy driving at practice, this paramount sense of the obligation of duty, self-control, and work, this earnestness in going manfully with the best light we have, as one force. And we may regard the intelligence driving at those ideas which are, after all, the basis of right practice, the ardent sense for all the new and changing combinations of them which man's development brings with it, the indomitable impulse to know and adjust them perfectly, as another force. And these two forces we may regard as in some sense rivals,—rivals not by the necessity of their own nature, but as exhibited in man and his history,—and rivals dividing the empire of the world between them. And to give these forces names from the two races of men who have supplied the most signal and splendid manifestations of them, we may call them respectively the forces of Hebraism and Hellenism. Hebraism and Hellenism,—between these two points of influence moves our world. At one time it feels more powerfully the attraction of one of them, at another time of the other; and it ought to be, though it never is, evenly and happily balanced between them.

The final aim of both Hellenism and Hebraism, as of all great spiritual disciplines, is no doubt the same: man's perfection or salvation. The very language which they both of them use in schooling us to reach this aim is often identical. Even when their language indicates by variation,—sometimes a broad variation, often a but slight and subtle variation,—the different courses of thought which are uppermost in each discipline, even then the unity of the final end and aim is still apparent. To employ the actual words of that discipline with which we ourselves are all of us most familiar, and the words of which, therefore, come most home to us, that final end and aim is „that we might be partakers of the divine nature.' These are the

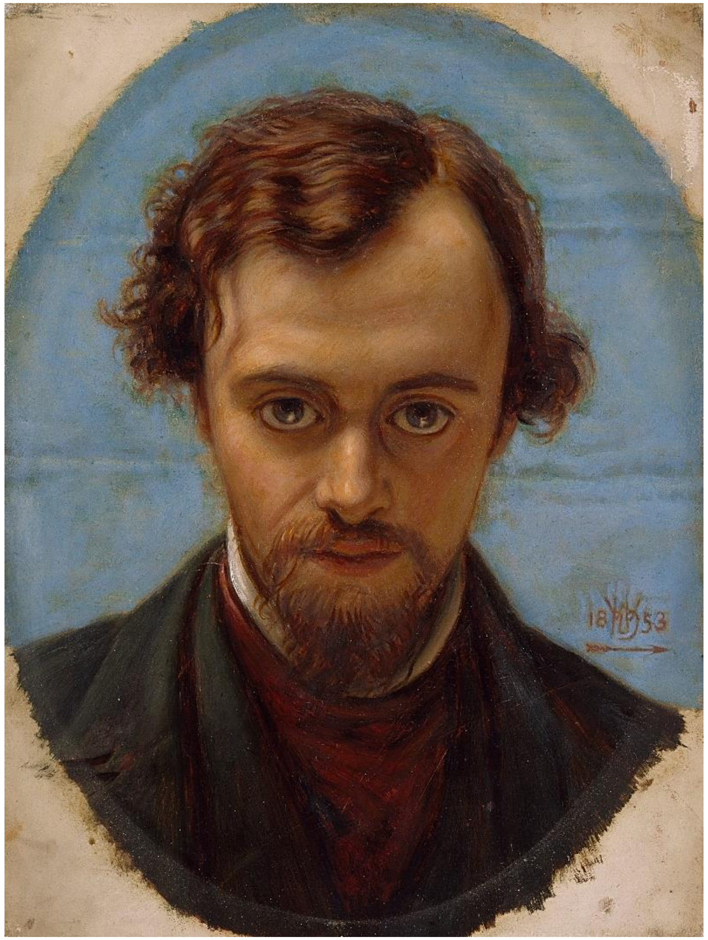
words of a Hebrew apostle, but of Hellenism and Hebraism alike this is, I say, the aim. When the two are confronted, as they very often are confronted, it is nearly always with what I may call a rhetorical purpose; the speaker's whole design is to exalt and enthrone one of the two, and he uses the other only as a foil and to enable him the better to give effect to his purpose. Obviously, with us, it is usually Hellenism which is thus reduced to minister to the triumph of Hebraism. There is a sermon on Greece and the Greek spirit by a man never to be mentioned without interest and respect, Frederick Robertson, in which this rhetorical use of Greece and the Greek spirit, and the inadequate exhibition of them necessarily consequent upon this, is almost ludicrous, and would be censurable if it were not to be explained by the exigences of a sermon. On the other hand, Heinrich Heine, and other writers of his sort, give us the spectacle of the tables completely turned, and of Hebraism brought in just as a foil and contrast to Hellenism, and to make the superiority of Hellenism more manifest. In both these cases there is injustice and misrepresentation. The aim and end of both Hebraism and Hellenism is, as I have said, one and the same, and this aim and end is august and admirable.

Still, they pursue this aim by very different courses. The uppermost idea with Hellenism is to see things as they really are; the uppermost idea with Hebraism is conduct and obedience. Nothing can do away with this ineffaceable difference; the Greek quarrel with the body and its desires is, that they hinder right thinking, the Hebrew quarrel with them is, that they hinder right acting.

(in *Longman Anthology* 1701-2 completed with text input from www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext03/ 7cltn10.txt)

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

(1828-1882)



Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) was born in London in 1828 as the son of an Italian scholar and patriot who had emigrated to England. After a general education in the junior department of King's College (1836-1841), Rossetti hesitated between poetry and painting as a vocation. He went to a drawing-school in London but he also read extensively—romantic and poetic literature, William Shakespeare, Goethe, Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, and Gothic tales of horror. He was fascinated by the work of the American writer Edgar Allan Poe. In 1847 he discovered the eighteenth century English painter-poet William Blake through the purchase of a volume of Blake's designs and writings in prose and verse.

Rossetti's first two oil paintings were simple in style, but were elaborate in symbolism. Some of the same atmosphere is felt in the rich word-painting and emotional force of his poem 'The Blessed Damozel', inspired by Poe's 'Lenore', published in 1850 in the first issue of *The Germ*, the Pre-Raphaelite periodical.

As a result of severe criticism against his paintings, he ceased to show them in public and gave up oils in favour of water-colours, which he could sell privately more easily. He painted scenes from Shakespeare, Robert Browning, and Dante, which allowed more freedom of imaginative treatment. He also illustrated Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* with heraldic glow and pattern of colour and medieval accessories of armour and dress.

In 1860, he married Elizabeth Siddal, a milliner's assistant who was working as a model for the group of Pre-Raphaelite artists. In spite of the fact that Rossetti was passionately in love with her, their marriage was to end tragically when Elizabeth, tormented by her constant ill health, his unfaithfulness and after she gave birth to a stillborn child, committed suicide in 1862. Rossetti became so very depressed because of this loss and his feelings of guilt that he decided to have the only copy of his unpublished poems buried in his wife's grave.

When the first Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was at an end, Rossetti managed, together with Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris to initiate a second phase of the Pre-Raphaelite movement when a romantic enthusiasm for a legendary past was to replace the realism of 'truth to nature' and the ambition of reforming the applied arts of design.

In his paintings literary themes started to be replaced with highly stylised and very appreciated pictures of women characterised by rich oil colours, sensuousness of representation and the presence of the distinctive 'Pre-Raphaelite' facial type—as

in 'The Blessed Damozel'.

On a literary plan the publication in 1861 of *The Early Italian Poets*, his translations of Italian poetry, had enjoyed a modest success. He began composing new poems and planned the recovery of the manuscript poems buried with his wife. When this happened, the exhumation visibly distressed the superstitious Rossetti. The publication of these poems followed in 1870 under the title *Poems*. They were well enough received until in 'The Fleshly School of Poetry' (1871) Rossetti was violently attacked by Robert Buchanan who saw Rossetti's verses, particularly the sonnet sequence called *The House of Life*, as a vulgar sensuality. The attack, combined with remorse and the amount of chloral and alcohol he now took for insomnia, brought about his collapse in 1872.

After he recovered, he continued to paint and write and published a revised edition of *Poems* (1881), and *Ballads and Sonnets* (1881), containing the completed sonnet sequence of *The House of Life*, in which he described the love between man and woman with passion and tragic intensity. Many of such sonnets reflect Rossetti's own contradictory emotional life.

From a visit to Keswick (in north-western England) in 1881, Rossetti returned in worse health than before, and died the following spring.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti is one of the most imposing and influential literary figures not only of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement but of all the age, an unusual and singular figure in England just as Beaudelaire was in France (Bowra 250). His poetry, just like his paintings, is overwrought, refined and heavily ornate and at times marred by concentration of detail and mannerisms, some of which are repetitive and often bring about a state of apathy and need of fresh air.

From *The House of Life*

The House of Life (1870, published complete in 1881), is a sonnet sequence unique in the intensity of its evocation of the mysteries of physical and spiritual love. These sonnets, written in the manner of Dante's sonnets, are written as an homage to beauty and love; they are an idealisation of love, allegories meant to associate sensuousness and sensuality with intellectual beauty (Macsiniuc 136). Consequently, they revolve round the artist's story of love and record his thoughts, feelings and emotions and move from intensely erotic passion and wish for perfect love to the disappointment of separation and the anguish of death.

'The Sonnet'

The cycle starts with 'The Sonnet', a sort of a preface, a statement of fact. It contains Rossetti's considerations on the metaphorical dimensions of the sonnet and asserts his intention to dedicate each sonnet to a moment of critical importance, of intense experience, each sonnet being an image of something crucial in the course of life, a gateway to the human soul.

A sonnet is a moment's monument,—
    Memorial from the soul's eternity
    To one dead deathless hour. Look that it be,
Of its arduous fullness reverent;
    Carve it in ivory or in ebony,
    As Day or Night may rule; and let Time see
Its flowering crest impearled and orient.

A Sonnet is a coin; its face reveals
    The soul—its converse, to what Power 'tis due—
Whether for tribute to the august appeals
    Of Life, or dower in Love's high Retinue,
It serve; or, 'mid the dark wharf's cavernous breath,
In Charon's palm it pay the toll to Death.

(in *English Verse* 422-3)

'Nuptial Sleep'

This is the sonnet that made the lecturer and journalist Robert Buchanan violently attack Rossetti in the pamphlet 'The Fleshy School of Poetry'. His reproach was that Rossetti's poems were too much a depiction of animal sensations, a reproduction of a sensual mood, that they dealt too much with the mysteries of sexual connection. Rossetti's reaction was prompt and temperamental in 'The Stealthy School of Criticism', published in the Athenaeum. He argued that Buchanan had failed to understand the whole point of his poems – that they were concerned with the human body and soul alike as part of a general representation of love and 'the responsibilities of life and its mysteries' (qtd. in Macsiniuc 136).
'Nuptial Sleep' captures the moments that immediately follow the passion of love-making when the lovers, still spellbound by the supreme moment of their adoration, disengage from their embrace and slowly fall asleep.

At length their long kiss severed, with sweet smart:
    And as the last slow sudden drops are shed
    From sparkling leaves when all the storm has fled,
So singly flagged the pulses of each heart.
Their bosoms *sundered, with the opening start
    Of married flowers to either side outspread
    From the knit stem; yet still their mouths, burnt red,
Fawned on each other where they lay apart.

Sleep sank them lower than the tide of dreams,
    And their dreams watched them sink, and slid away.
Slowly their souls swam up again, through gleams
    Of watered light and dull drowned waifs of day;

Till from some wonder of new moods and streams
He woke, and wandered more: for there she lay.

(in *English Verse* 423)

'Silent Noon'

'Silent Noon' is a sonnet which combines the meticulous representation of lively images of nature and the deep surrounding silence with the delicacy of evoked feelings in a miniature, representative for Rossetti's style. Memorable are the ending lines of the sonnet, created with simplicity of diction. The message is a familiar one: enjoy the hour for it is so beautiful and so transient.

Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass—
The finger-points look through like rosy blooms;
Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams and glooms
*'Neath *billowing skies that scatter and amass.
All round our nest, far as the eyes can pass,
Are golden *kingcup-fields with silver edge
Where the *cow-parsley *skirts the *hawthorn edge.
*'Tis visible silence, still as the hourglass.

Deep in the sun-searched growths the *dragonfly
Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the sky—
So this winged hour is dropped to us from above.
Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless *dower,
This close-companioned inarticulate hour
When twofold silence was the song of love.

(in *English Verse* 424)

From 'The Blessed Damozel'

'The Blessed Damozel' is one of Rossetti's best known poems in which the typically Rossettian representation of a maiden (or of a woman) appears: in graceful posture, mysterious and languishing, loaded with symbolic meanings.

The poem's purpose is 'to praise the human love of man and woman' (Evans 29). It depicts two worlds, a mystical and a material one. The mystical world is that of heaven where the Blessed Damozel sees the souls mounting up to God and longs for her reunion with her lover left alone in the material world of reality, referred to in the first person and whose comments are inserted between parenthetical passages. But, in spite of all her attempts, this union remains no more than a lover's wish.

The representation of these two worlds set in contrast is 'pleasurable and surprising' (Evans 29). Remarkable is the poet's insistence on detail and the combination of erotic and spiritual elements with sensual and mystical overtones.

The blessed damozel leaned out	Slăvita doamnă desfăcu
From the gold *bar of Heaven;	A cerului perdele;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth	Îi erau ochii limpezi, mari
Of waters stilled at even;	Ca apa din vâlcele;
She had three lilies in her hand,	Trei crini avea în mîna ei
And the stars in her hair were seven.	Şi-n păru-i şapte stele.
Her robe, *ungirt from *clasp to *hem,	De flori ne-mpodobit, veşmântul
No *wrought flowers did adorn,	Ea îl purta descins;
But a white rose of Mary's gift,	Un alb măceş dat de Maria
For service *meetly worn;	De gât îi era prins
Her hair that lay along her back	Şi părul ei bălan ca grâul

Was yellow like ripe corn.

*Herseemed she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers;
*Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years
… Yet now, and in this place,
Surely she leaned o'er me—her hair
Fell all about my face …
Nothing: the autumn fall of leaves.
The whole year sets *apace.)

It was the *rampart of God's house
That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun;
So high, that looking downward *thence
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood

Se revărsa aprins.

O zi i se părea c-a fost
În ceruri cântăreață;
Uimirea tot mai stăruia
Pe liniştita-i față;
Măcar că pentru cei din jur
O zi era o viață.

(Iar pentru *mine*, vieți şi vieți...
...Acum, aici, o dată
M-a-mbrățişat şi-mi era fața
În păru-i îngropată.
Frunzişul toamnei cade. Anul
Va asfinți îndată.)

În casa din vecii zidită
A Domnului stătea,
În tinda unde-ncepe spațiul
Peste genunea grea
Şi soarele, din înălțime,
I se părea o stea.

Încinge tinda ca o punte

Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a *fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
*'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
Their heart remembered names;
And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames. […]

The sun was gone now; the curled moon
Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
Had when they sang together.

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,
Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be *harkened? When those bells
Possessed the mid-day air,

Eterul temerar;
Jos, zi şi noapte se îngână
Şi-şi caută hotar
Pân´ spre pământul ce se-nvârte
Cu zumzet de bondar.

Ci-n preajma dânsei era pacea
Luminii curgătoare
Şi-a liniştii. Pe serafimi
În zborul lor nici boare
Nu-i abătea şi nici răsunet
Din piscuri sau ponoare.

Ea se plecă şi se desprinse
Din cearcănul vrăjit,
Se rezemă pe caldu-i piept
Ca de-un pervaz râvnit,
Iar crinii de pe brațul ei
Păreau c-au adormit.

Vedea cum timpul, peste lumi,
Pulsează-amețitor;
Privirea-i căuta poteca
´N al hăului pripor;

Strove not her steps to reach my side
Down all the echoing stair?)

'I wish that he were come to me,
For he will come,' she said.
'Have I not prayed in Heaven?—on earth,
Lord, Lord has he not prayed?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
And shall I feel afraid?

'When round his head the aureole clings,
And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand and go with him
To the deep wells of light;
We will step down as to a stream,
And bathe there in God's light. […]

'There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me:—
Only to live as once on earth
With Love,—only to be,
As then awhile, for ever now
Together, I and he.'

Apoi vorbi, cântând cum cântă
Planetele în cor.

Sfinţise; luna ghemuită
Plutea peste genună
Ca fulgerul; şi tăcerea oarbă
Căuta să şi-o supună
Cu-un glas ca-al sferelor cereşti
Când cântă împreună.

(Nu mi-a trimis prin tril de păsări
Cântarea care-mi place
Când clopotele stăpâneau
A dulce-amiezii pace,
Pe scara de ecouri, paşii
Nu i-a-ndreptat încoace?)

„Ah, de-ar veni la mine, spuse –
El ar dori să vie!
Nu ne-am rugat – el pe pământ
Şi eu în cer? Tărie
Nu este-n două rugi unite?
Teamă de ce să-mi fie?

She gazed and listened and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild,—
'All this is when he comes,' She ceased.
The light thrilled towards her, filled
With angels in strong level flight.
Her eyes prayed, and she smiled.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres:
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

(in *English Verse* 710-4)

Când nimbu-i va încinge fruntea
Şi-o fi în dalb veşmânt,
Am să-i arăt ale luminii
Izvoare câte sunt
Şi ca-ntr-un râu ne vom scălda
În văzul Celui-Sfânt.
Vom sta lângă altarul tainic
A cărui flăcărui
Fără-ncetare sunt stârnite
De rugi nălțate Lui;
Şi-a noastre s-or topi, primite,
Ca pâcle albăstrui!

Vom sta culcați în umbra sacră
A domnului ceresc;
Adesea, frunzele-i porumbul
Cu grijă-l oploşesc
Şi când le-atinge el cu pana,
Sfânt numele-i rostesc.

Stând astfel, ce cântări cunosc
Chiar eu l-oi învăța:
Şi glasu-i blând mă va-ntrerupe
Şi în tăcerea mea

Ştiinţă nouă şi putere
El pururi va afla.”

(Noi doi, spui tu...Cândva, de mult,
Fusesem una. Dar
Cum să înveşnicească Domnul
Al contopirii har,
Când sufletu-mi era al tău
Prin dragostea lui doar?)

„Noi doi, grăi, vom cerceta
Dumbrăvile Mariei
Şi-a ei cinci serve-al căror nume
Sunt cinci mari simfonii:
Cecilia, Gertrude, Magdalena, Marg´ret şi Rosalie

Li-i părul împletit şi fruntea
Cununi le-o înconjor:
Şi, roată stând, torc fir de flăcări
Din aurit fuior
Spre-a ţese straie scumpe celor
Născuţi după ce mor.

De s-o sfii şi o să tacă,

Eu fața-mi o s-o-nclin
Spre-a lui de dragoste vorbindu-i
Nesfiicios, deplin,
Şi Sfânta-mi va ierta mândria
Şi eu am să-l alin.

Ea ne va duce, mână-n mână,
La Domnul, cărui gloate
Se pleacă-adânc, împresurându-l
Cu frunțile nimbate;
Şi-n cale îngeri ne-or cânta
Din lire minunate.

Şi pentru el şi mine-atâta
Voi cere Celui-Sfânt:
În dragoste să viețuim
Ca-altădată pe pământ –
Atunci, puțin, acum – de-a pururi,
Căci draga lui eu sunt."

Privi şi ascultă; şi vorba-i
Se stinse-apoi, blajină:
„Când va veni". Tăcu. O-nvăluise
Un freamăt de lumină

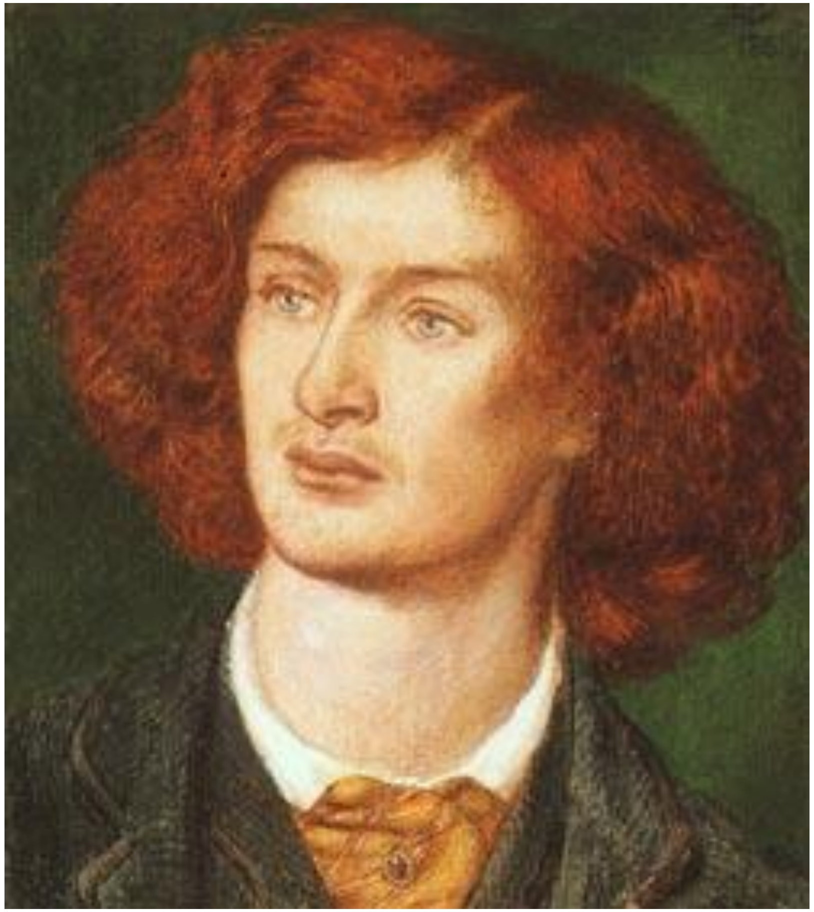
Şi-un stol de serafimi. Cu ochii
Ea se ruga senină.

(Surâsu-i l-am văzut.) Când ei
Pieiră-n nesfârşit,
Ea brațele îşi sprijini
De gardul aurit
Şi fața şi-o umbri şi plânse.
(Cum plânge-am auzit.)

[Traducere de Leon Levițchi şi Tudor Dorin, Editura Minerva, București, 1981-1984]

Algernon Charles Swinburne

1837-1909



Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909) was born on 5 April in London. Part of his early life he spent on the Isle of Wight, where he first developed his passionate love of the sea, which was to become a prominent feature in his poetry. He attended Eton and Balliol College, Oxford, which he left in 1860 without taking a degree. There he met William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti and was attracted to their Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

Literary success came with the verse drama *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865), in which he attempted to re-create in English the spirit and form of Greek tragedy. *Atalanta* was followed by the first series of *Poems and Ballads* in 1866, a volume which shocked Victorian audiences to find open display of masochism, flagellation, and paganism in his verses. This volume contains some of his finest poems, among them 'Dolores' and 'The Garden of Proserpine'. The book was vigorously attacked for its 'feverish carnality' though it was enthusiastically welcomed by the younger generation.

In 1867 Swinburne met his idol, Giuseppe Mazzini, and a few years later he published the poetry collection *Songs Before Sunrise* (1871), which is principally concerned with the theme of political liberty and shows the influence of that Italian patriot. The second series of *Poems and Ballads*, less hectic and sensual than the first, appeared in 1878.

During this time Swinburne's health was being undermined by alcoholism and by the excesses resulting from his abnormal temperament and masochistic tendencies; he experienced periodic fits of intense nervous excitement, from which, however, his remarkable powers of recuperation enabled him to recover quickly several times.

Swinburne eventually became a figure of respectability and adopted reactionary views. He published 23 volumes of poetry, prose, and drama during these years, but apart from the long poem *Tristram of Lyonesse* (1882) and the verse tragedy *Marino Faliero* (1885), his most important poetry belongs to the first half of his life.

Swinburne was also an important and prolific English literary critic of the later nineteenth century. Among his best critical writings are *Essays and Studies* (1875) and his monographs on William Shakespeare (1880), Victor Hugo (1886), and Ben Jonson (1889). He also wrote on William Blake, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Charles Baudelaire, and his elegy on the latter, 'Ave Atque Vale' ['Hale and Farewell'] (1867-1868), is among his finest works.

Swinburne is a symbol of mid-Victorian poetic revolt, famous for prosodic innovations, versification bravura. The characteristic qualities of his richly modulated verse are insistent alliteration, unflagging rhythmic energy, sheer melodiousness, great variation of pace and stress, natural expansion of a given theme and almost explosive use of imagery.

From *Atalanta in Calydon*

For Swinburne ancient Greece was a land of freedom where people could live and express themselves without any restraint. Consequently, he placed his tragedy *Atalanta in Calydon* in old Greece and adopted the form of a classical Greek tragedy. The play is judged today not because of its content but as a result of its form—Swinburne's language displays remarkable metrical skill and its suggestiveness is brought to very high levels to render the dramatic character of the story.

As Turner mentions (136), the power of the play lies chiefly in the choral lyrics, with their inventive rhythms, mood of great intensity. They are done in a variety of metres and show Swinburne experimenting in the intoxicating swing which was to be the mark of so much of his later poetry.

From the First Chorus: 'When the Hounds of Spring'

This chorus celebrated the return of spring in the spirit of the Greek Dionysian festivals. It is an incantation poem addressed to the virginal goddess of the hunt and the moon, named Artemis in Greek mythology and Diana in Roman mythology. As she chases her game, she will also chase winter away.

The aim of this chorus was to suggest a sensuality connected with the elemental forces of nature—here the awakening of spring—the secret reality of sin and the meaningless way the world is governed. Remarkable in it is the musicality of lines, achieved, as is often the case of Swinburne, with the skilful use of alliteration, assonance and repetition.

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain

Pe urmele iernii când vara ogarii şi-aţine.
Atunci mamei lunilor a-I place

Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright *nightingale amorous
Is half *assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless *vigil and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying *quivers,
Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
With a clamour of waters, and with might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most *fleet,
Over the splendour and speed of thy feet;
For the faint east quickens, the *wan west shivers,
Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where we shall find her, how shall we sing to her,
Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?
O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,
Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring!
For the stars and the winds are unto her
As *raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

Ca pajişti, hăţişuri şi câmpuri de viscole pline
În freamăt de foi şi de ploi să îmbrace;
Iar galeşa privighetoare şi-astâmpără-n parte
Canonul stârnit de-a lui Itylus moarte,
Iscodirea tăcută a feţelor cele străine
Şi-a navelor trace.

Vino cu arce-ncordate şi doldora tolbe, Fecioară
Fără cusur, domnind pe-al luminii imperii
Cu zvon de vânt vino şi râuri dând pe dinafară,
Cu larmă de ape, stăpâna puterii!
O, tu cea mai sprintenă zee, înnoadă sandale
Peste splendoarea gleznelor iuţi ale tale,
Căci zorii se-aprind şi palul amurg se-fioară
Lângă picioarele zilei şi cele-ale serii.

Unde afla-o-vom, cum vom cânta pentru ea,
Şi cum să-i cuprindem genunchii cu palmele oare?
De-ar fi inima omului faclă întinsă spre ea,
Faclă sau zvâcnet de apă înalt ţâşnitoare!
Căci stele şi vânt i-s precum un veşmânt,
Cum şi tropii harpistului straie îi sunt;
Căci stelele noi sau căzute se-anină pe ea,
Iar vântul de sud şi de vest îi înalţă tropare.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins;
And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers *begotten,
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
Ripe grasses *trammel a travelling foot,
The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
From leaf to flower and flower to fruit;
And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire
And the oat is heard above the *lyre,
And the hoofèd heel of a satyr that crushes
The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

(in *English Verse* 742-3)

Căci ploile-au stat, dispar ale iernii ruine
Şi vremea nămeţilor cea ticăloasa,
Şi zile ce-i fac pe ibovnici să se dezbine,
Prea scurte amiezi, nopţi ce tot mai greoaie apasă;
Uitate sunt azi suvenirile vremii posace,
Nimic nu mai degeră, mugurul floare desface,
Iar crângul e verde, şi iată că vine
Din boboc în boboc primăvara frumoasă.

Trestia-n floare gârlele pline hrăneşte,
Ierburi în pârg lănţuiesc pe drumeţ de picioare,
Slaba văpaie a noului an se-nteţeşte
Din frunze în flori şi în poame din floare;
Frunza şi rodul ca focul şi auru-s rude;
Trişca de-ovăz mai tare ca lira se-aude;
Şi-asculţi copitatul câlcâi de satir cum striveşte
Coji de castane-n cărare.

Şi, ziua, Pan—Bachus în faptul serii,
Mai iuţi ca iezii repezi din copite,
Alungă, încântându-le, puzderii
Şi de Menade şi de Bassaride;
Şi, moi ca nişte buze moi râzând,

Cad frunze-n rarişti, vesele—pe rând
Dezvăluind şi ascunzând vederii,
Zeul stârnit, fecioarele pitite.

Cad iederii şi-al Bacantei păr umbros,
Peste sprâncene, ochiul tăinuindu-l,
Iar curpeni albi, când lunecă în jos,
Îi dezgolesc sâni lucii ca argintul;
Se-clină clematita grea de foi
Şi iederi sub povara poamei noi,
Şi-agață de piciorul lor spăimos
Fugaciul faun, lupul urmărindu-l.

[Traducere de Leon Levițchi şi Tudor Dorin, Editura Minerva, București, 1981-1984]

From *Poems and Ballads* (First Series)

This is the volume which so scandalized its contemporary readers. The poems are often regarded as English versions of Beaudelaire's *fleurs du mal*. Though never directly expressed but suggested, here sensuality has sado-masochistic overtones, passion is anomalous and consuming, love is incestuous, nymphomaniac or necrophiliac and does not provide pleasure but 'fever of desire and pain and an unending satiety' (Evans 74).

From 'Dolores'

The poem is a parody to a hymn to Virgin Mary – Notre Dame de Sept Douleurs' – who becomes here 'Our Lady of Pain'. The speaking voice is that of a connoisseur of sadist practices. Outrageous for the Victorian public but also for some modern readers are the sado-masochistic images associated with evil, the induced sin and the shocking associations with Virgin Mary and the repeated strange and obsessive invocations of Our Lady after the rhythmic 'by'.

By the hunger of change and emotion
    By the thirst of unbearable things,
By despair, the twin-born of devotion
    By the pleasure that winces and stings,
The delight that consumes the desire,
    The desire that outruns the delight,
By the cruelty deaf as a fire

And blind as the night,

By the *ravenous teeth that have smitten
Through the kisses that blossom and bud,
By the lips intertwisted and bitten
Till the foam has a savour of blood,
By the pulse as it rises and falters,
By the hands as they slacken and strain,
I adjure thee, respond from thine altars,
Our Lady of Pain.

Wilt thou smile as a woman disdaining
The light fire in the veins of a boy?
But he comes to thee sad, without feigning,
Who has wearied of sorrow and joy;
Less careful of labour and glory
Than the elders whose hair has uncurled;
And young, but with fancies as *hoary
And grey as the world.

I have passed from the outermost portal
To the shrine where a sin is a prayer;
What care though the service be mortal?
O, our Lady of Torture, what care?

All thine the last wine that I pour is,
The last in the *chalice we drain,
O fierce and luxurious Dolores,
Our Lady of Pain.

All thine the new wine of desire,
The fruit of four lips as they clung
Till the hair and the eyelids took fire,
The foam of a *serpentine tongue,
The froth of the serpents of pleasure,
More salt than the foam of the sea,
Now felt as a flame, now at leisure
As wine shed for me.

Ah thy people, thy children, thy chosen,
Marked cross from the womb and perverse!
They have found out the secret to *cozen
The gods that constrain us and curse;
They alone, they are wise, and no other;
Give me place, even me, in their train,
O my sister, my spouse, and my mother,
Our Lady of Pain.

(in *The Poems* 158-9)

From 'The Garden of Proserpine'

'The Garden of Proserpine' is one of the two poems dedicated to Proserpine, as goddess of the Underworld. Her garden is a garden of death, a place where time is suspended, where all motion has been abolished, where tiredness leads to slumber and oblivion.
It is here where the speaker would like to exchange the bustle and noise of our world with eternal quietness and his weariness with total repose. All this is remarkably suggested in the poem which describes a memorable image of a state of emotional inertia.

Here, where the world is quiet;
    Here, where all trouble seems
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
    In doubtful dreams of dreams;
I watch the green field growing
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest time and mowing,
    A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
    And men that laugh and weep
Of what may come hereafter
    For men that sow to reap:
I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers

And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbour,
And far from eye or ear
Wan waves and wet winds labour,
Weak ships and spirits steer;
They drive adrift, and *whither
They *wot not who make *thither;
But no such winds blow hither,
And no such things grow here. […]

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
Who gathers all things mortal
With cold immortal hands;
Her languid lips are sweeter
Than love's who fears to greet her
To men that mix and meet her
From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
She waits for all men born;
Forgets the earth her mother,
The life of fruits and corn;

And spring and seed and swallow
Take wing for her and follow
Where summer song rings hollow
    And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
    The old loves with wearier wings;
And all dead years draw thither,
    And all disastrous things;
Dead dreams of days forsaken
Blind buds that snows have shaken,
Wild leaves that winds have taken,
    Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
    And joy was never sure;
To-day will die to-morrow
    Time stoops to no man's lure;
And love, grown faint and fretful
With lips but half regretful
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
    Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,

From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be
That no life lives for ever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
Nor any change of light:
Nor sound of waters shaken,
Nor any sound or sight:
Nor wintry leaves nor *vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal;
Only the sleep eternal
In an eternal night.

(in *The Poems* 169-71)

From 'The Triumph of Time'

'The Triumph of Time' is another poem of rejection of civilisation and life, a poetic materialisation of Swinburne's obsession for the sea. Here the sea embodies a possessive and destructive telluric goddess in the shape of a mother and lover. In spite of the fact that sea does not give life but takes it away, filled as she is with human graves, he would like to cast off all his human clothes, escape from the world of constraints, of falsity and plunge into the abyss of the sea and be reunited with her in a state of permanent sleep and eternity.

I will go back to the great sweet mother,
Mother and lover of men, the sea.
I will go down to her, I and none other,
Close with her, kiss her, and mix her with me;
Cling to her, strive with her, hold her fast.
O fair white mother, in days long past
Born without sister, born without brother,
Set free my soul as thy soul is free.

O fair green-girdled mother of mine,
Sea, that *art clothed with the sun and the rain,
Thy sweet hard kisses are strong like wine,
Thy large embraces are keen like pain.
Save me and hide me with all thy waves,
Find me one grave of *thy thousand graves,

Those pure cold populous graves of *thine
*Wrought without hand in a world without stain.

I shall sleep, and move with the moving ships,
Change as the winds change, *veer in the tide;
My lips will feast on the foam of thy lips,
I shall rise with thy rising, with thee subside;
Sleep, and know not if she be, if she were,
Filled full with life to the eyes and hair,
As a rose is fulfilled to the roseleaf tips
With splendid summer and perfume and pride.

This woven *raiment of nights and days,
Were it once cast off and unwound from me,
Naked and glad would I walk in *thy ways,
Alive and aware of thy ways and *thee;
Clear of the whole world, hidden at home,
Clothed with the green and crowned with the foam,
A pulse of the life of thy *straits and bays,
A vein in the heart of the streams of the sea.

Fair mother, fed with the lives of men,
Thou art subtle and cruel at heart, men say.
Thou *hast taken, and *shalt not render again;

Thou art full of thy dead, and cold as they,
But death is the worst that comes of thee;
Thou art fed with our dead, O mother, O sea,
But when hast thou fed on our hearts? or when,
Having given us love, hast thou taken away?

O tender-hearted, O perfect lover,
Thy lips are bitter, and sweet thine heart.
The hopes that hurt and the dreams that hover,
Shall they not vanish away and apart?
But thou, thou art sure, thou art older than earth;
Thou art strong for death and fruitful of birth;
Thy depths conceal and thy gulfs discover;
From the first thou *wert; in the end thou art.

(in *The Poems* 42-4)

Thomas Hardy

(1840-1928)



Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) was born in Upper Bockhampton, Dorset, into the family of a stonemason and builder. Hardy's early experience of rural life, with its seasonal rhythms and oral culture, was fundamental to much of his later writing. He spent a year at the village school when he was eight and then moved on to schools in Dorchester, the nearby county town, where he received a good grounding in mathematics and Latin. In 1856 he was apprenticed to John Hicks, a local architect, and in 1862, shortly before his 22nd birthday, he moved to London and became a draftsman.

He temporarily abandoned architecture and the prospects of becoming a priest and started writing verses in the 1860s which would emerge in revised form in later volumes whose lack of success made him turn to prose quite reluctantly.

The first novel that drew the public's attention to his name was *Desperate Remedies* (1871), a novel influenced by the contemporary 'sensation' fiction of Wilkie Collins. In his next novel, however, the brief and affectionately humorous idyll *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), Hardy adopted a distinct style much more appropriate for his own personality.

In early 1870 Hardy was sent to make an architectural assessment of the lonely and dilapidated Church of St. Juliot in Cornwall. There he first met the rector's vivacious sister-in-law, Emma Lavinia Gifford, who was to become his wife four years later. She actively encouraged and assisted him in his literary endeavours and his next novel, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873), a melodramatic story, was heavily drawn upon the circumstances of their courtship in the wild Cornish setting.

Hardy's next novel was *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), where he introduced Wessex for the first time and which made Hardy famous by its agricultural settings and its distinctive blend of humorous, melodramatic, pastoral, and tragic elements.

Hardy and Emma Gifford were married, against the wishes of both their families, in September 1874. Four years later he published *The Return of the Native* (1878), increasingly admired for its powerfully evoked setting of Egdon Heath, which was based on the sombre countryside Hardy had known as a child.

Hardy's next novel of fame was *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886) which incorporates recognizable details of Dorchester's history and topography. The novel which followed was *The Woodlanders* (1887), where he deals with socio-economic issues.

Wessex Tales (1888) was the first collection of the short stories that Hardy had long been publishing in magazines.

The closing phase of Hardy's career in fiction was marked by the publication of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the*

Obscure (1895), which are generally considered his finest novels. Though *Tess* is the most richly 'poetic' of Hardy's novels, and *Jude* the most despondently written, both books offer deeply sympathetic representations of working-class figures. *Jude the Obscure* was very badly received by the Victorian public and critics. It was considered to be irreligious, immoral, untruthful, groundlessly pessimistic and demoralising. It was even withdrawn from public libraries. This made Hardy abandon novel writing and turn to poetry for the remainder of his life, over 30 years.

Thomas Hardy associated many of his novels with the postulate that modern civilisation corrupts and crushes the individual and, as such, man's destiny cannot be but tragic. He gave expression to the pessimism that had became a component of spiritual life at the end of the nineteenth century and developed, accordingly, a philosophy of pessimism unparalleled in English literature.

His ambition was to recreate the spirit of the ancient tragedies in novel form. Accordingly, he adopted the old Greek principle of fate and predestination. The result is that his men and women are condemned to live in a world that is ruled by universal and cruel laws against which there is nothing they can do. In this universal game with preset rules his characters, strong-willed souls are but powerless pawns doomed to lose their hopeless struggle against Blind Destiny (or Blind Chance). Behind all human actions is a supreme force, the Immanent Will, unpredictable and often erratic, which governs human life and which manipulates events and is hostile or, at the best, indifferent to the good or suffering of individuals.

Hardy's characters are strong personalities, peasants or professional people risen from the country-folk. Hardy's men—such as, Clym Yeobright (from *The Return of the Native*), Gabriel Oak (from *Far from the Madding Crowd*), Michael Henchard (from *The Mayor of Casterbridge)* or Jude (from *Jude the Obscure*)—are robust and hard-working individuals struggling against the experience of pain or the disease of thought. His women—such as, Bathsheba Everdene, (from *Far from the Madding Crowd*), Eustacia Vye (from *The Return of the Native*) or Tess (from *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*)—are more instinctive and passionate, more elementary in good or evil. These characters are perceived rather as the tools or the easily overcome victims of ill-fortune, of cruel fate—all the more tragic creatures because of the sensibility of their hearts. They appear to be crushed by a triple superior force no matter what they do—that of nature in the first place, then that of hostile chance and, finally, that of personal errors.

The result is that his novels—*Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Return of the Native*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Jude the Obscure*—illustrate the struggle between men and ill fortune, and, above all, the urge to escape predestination.

In all such novels Blind Chance, though physically invisible, is an important and haunting presence which triggers or catalyses dramatic and tragic conflicts.

The setting where such forces act and occurrences happen is a southern corner of England situated in Dorsetshire which Hardy named Wessex, an areal filled with history and paganism and where his characters, perceived as elemental figures with ancestral passions, are doomed to run the implacable course that fate and human condition set for them.

From *The Return of the Native*

The Return of the Native (1878) is the story of Eustacia Vye, who yearns romantically for passionate experiences beyond the hated heath, and Clym Yeobright, the returning native, who is blinded to his wife's needs by a naively idealistic zeal for the moral improvement of Egdon's inhabitants. It is a sombre story of trapped human passions, of illicit and thwarted love which ends in tragedy.

This is the first of Hardy's novels where he constantly makes appeal to myth and symbol. Accordingly, we find elements of local folklore but also allusions to Greek and Saxon mythology. Certain characters also bear resemblance to pre-Christian and classical (Greek) heroes. In this respect the peasants carry out pagan practices but they also act as a sort of chorus of an ancient Greek tragedy, as Galea remarks (183); Clym is a sort of Prometheus with the destiny of Oedipus whereas Eustacia acts like a pagan goddess who brings about disaster. Alternatively, the plot, as is usual with Hardy, offers the readers tragic variations on the theme of destiny and chance.

Egdon Heath

*The background to this story and the 'true subject of the novel' (Klingopoulos 414) is the mysterious Egdon Heath, symbolising something permanent against the ephemeral (Galea 183). The Heath is forcefully brought forth and made to act as the main character of the novel, permanent and inhospitable where the *furze-cutters have to toil for their everyday existence. The heath with its brooding permanence becomes symbolic of the doom of man and represents Hardy's obsession with the tragic fate of man. Its description is loaded with elemental greatness and in its vastness every living seems to be annihilated. The description inserted underneath opens the novel.*

A Saturday afternoon in November was approaching the time of twilight, and the vast track of unenclosed wild known as Egdon Heath embrowned itself moment by moment. Overhead the hollow stretch of whitish cloud shutting out the sky was as a tent which had the whole heath for its floor.

The heaven being spread with this pallid screen and the earth with the darkest vegetation, their melting-line at the horizon was clearly marked. In such contrast the heath wore the appearance of an instalment of night which had taken up its place before its astronomical hour was come: darkness had to a great extent arrived hereon, while day stood distinct in the sky. Looking upward, a furze-cutter would have been inclined to continue work; looking down, he would have decided to finish his fagot and go home. The distant rims of the world and of the firmament seemed to be a division in time no less than a division in matter. The face of the heath by its mere complexion added half an hour to evening; it could in like manner retard the dawn, sadden noon, anticipated the frowning of storms scarcely generated, and intensify the opacity of a moonless midnight to a cause of shaking and dread.

In fact, precisely at this transitional point of its nightly roll into darkness the great and particular glory of the Egdon waste began, and nobody could be said to understand the heath who had not been there at such a time. It could best be felt when it

Într-o sâmbătă de noiembrie, o dată cu după amiaza care se apropia de asfinţit, vasta întindere de pământ sălbatic, cunoscută sub numele de Egdon Heath, se întuneca treptat. Deasupra, norii albicioşi, ca o pânză învolburată aruncată peste cer, formau parcă tavanul unui cort ce avea drept podea întreg ţinutul.

Acoperit de perdeaua alburie, cerul desena la orizont o linie precisă, acolo unde întâlnea pământul înveşmântat cu vegetaţie de culoare închisă. În acest contrast, câmpia stearpă întruchipa venirea unei nopţi pogorâte înainte de împlinirea orei astronomice: întunericul cuprindea aici totul, pe când ziua mai dăinuia clară pe cer. De privea în sus, cosaşul era îmbiat să-şi continue munca; de privea în jos, se grăbea să-şi lege snopul şi să plece spre casă. Marginile îndepărtate ale pământului şi ale firmamentului păreau că împart nu numai natura ci şi timpul. Faţa landei sălbatice adăuga prin însăşi culoarea ei jumătate de oră serii; după cum, în acelaşi chip, putea întârzia zorile, întrista amiezile, prevesti încruntarea furtunilor de-abia iscate şi adâncì, până la spaimă şi înfricoşare, miezul de noapte fără lună.

De fapt, măreţia şi adevărata frumuseţe a ţinutului Egdon atunci începea, în tocmai acel moment când se săvârşea lunecarea în noapte; iar cel care nu se aflase niciodată în câmpia stearpă la astfel de ceasuri, nu putea spune că o înţelege. O simţeai mai bine când nu puteai să desluşeşti limpede tot

could not clearly be seen, its complete effect and explanation lying in this and the succeeding hours before the next dawn: then, and only then, did it tell its true tale. The spot was, indeed, a near relation of night, and when night showed itself an apparent tendency to gravitate together could be perceived in its shades and the scene. The sombre stretch of rounds and hallows seemed to rise and meet the evening gloom in pure sympathy, the heath exhaling darkness as rapidly as the heavens precipitated it. And so the obscurity in the air and the obscurity in the land closed together in a black fraternization toward which each advanced halfway.

The place became full of a watchful intentness now; for when other things sank brooding to sleep the heath appeared slowly to awake and listen. Every night its Titanic form seemed to await something; but it had waited thus, unmoved during so many centuries, through the crisis of so many things, that it could only be imagined to await one last crisis—the final overthrow.

It was a spot which returned upon the memory of those who loved it with an aspect of peculiar and kindly congruity. Smiling *champaigns of flowers and fruit hardly do this, for they are permanently harmonious only with an existence of better reputation as to its issues than the present. Twilight combined with the scenery of Egdon Heath to evolve a thing majestic without severity, impressive without showiness, emphatic in its

farmecul şi taina ei fiind cuprinse în acel ceas anume şi în cele care urmează până la răsăritul soarelui: atunci, şi numai atunci, îşi povestea adevărata poveste. Locul acesta era rudă bună cu noaptea; când se lăsa noaptea puteai observa cum umbrele ei tind să se împreune cu priveliştea. Întinderea sinuoasă, presărată de mărăcinişuri, se ridica parcă în întâmpinarea crepusculului, landa răspândind tot atâta întuneric cât cerul. Astfel întunecimea văzduhului şi cea a pământului se întruneau înfrățindu-se, la jumătate de drum spre noapte.

O stare de încordată veghe domnea acum în cuprins; când totul cădea pradă somnului, pârlogul părea că se trezeşte şi ascultă. Noapte de noapte părea că aşteaptă ceva. Dar stătea la pândă de atâtea secole, martor încremenit al atâtor destine, încât aveai impresia că singurul lucru pe care-l mai putea aştepta era cataclismul final.

Ținutul acesta dăinuia în amintirea celui care-l îndrăgea, cu o dulce şi ciudată trăinicie. Plaiurile însorite, încărcate de flori şi roade, se întipăresc rareori cu atâta putere în minte, căci ele se armonizează doar cu o existență ideală, nu cu cea prezentă, reală. Împreunarea luminii crepusculare cu peisajul câmpiei Egdon era majestuoasă şi lipsită de severitate impresionantă fără să fie spectaculoasă, măreață prin simplitatea ei dar totodată încărcată de prevestiri rele. Ceea ce conferă unei fațade de închisoare mai multă demnitate decât unui palat de două ori mai

admonitions, grand in its simplicity. The qualifications which frequently invest the façade of a prison with far more dignity than is found in the façade of a palace double its size lent to this heath a sublimity in which spots renowned for beauty of the accepted king are utterly wanting. Fair prospects wed happily with fair times; but alas, if times be not fair! Men have oftener suffered from the mockery of a place too smiling for their reasons than from the oppression of surroundings oversadly *tinged. Haggard Egdon appealed to a subtler and scarcer instinct, to a more recently learned emotion, than that which responds to the sort of beauty called charming and fair.

Indeed, it is a question if the exclusive reign of this orthodox beauty is not approaching its last quarter. The new Vale of Tempe may be a *gaunt waste in Thule: human souls may find themselves in closer and closer harmony with external things wearing a sombreness distasteful to our race when it was young. The time seems near, if it has not actually arrived, when the chastened sublimity of a moor, a sea or a mountain will be all of a nature that is absolutely in keeping with the moods of the more thinking among mankind. And ultimately, to the commonest tourist, spots like Iceland may become what the vineyards and myrtle-gardens of South Europe are to him now; and Heidelberg and Baden be passed unheeded as he hastens from the Alps to the sand dunes of Scheveningen.

mare, împrumuta cuprinsului o notă de sublim, de care alte locuri, renumite prin frumusețea lor, sunt total văduvite. Priveliştile încântătoare sunt pentru vremuri bune: dar vai! cum nu se potrivesc cu cele de restrişte! Căci pentru oameni, zâmbetul naturii – ca o batjocură adusă sufletului îndurerat – e mult mai des pricină de suferință decât tristețea unui ținut sumbru. Halucinantul Edgon Heath trezea o emoție mai de curând deprinsă de om, un sentiment mai subtil şi mai ales decât cel care corespunde felului de frumusețe denumit încântător şi fermecător. E de altfel un semn de întrebare dacă domnia exclusivă a acestui fel ortodox de frumusețe nu se apropie de sfârşit. S-ar putea ca noua vale Tempe să fie un cuprins uscat în Thule: sufletul omului se acordă din ce în ce mai mult cu lucruri a căror înfățişare sumbră nu era pe placul speței, în erele trecute. S-a apropiat vremea, sau poate a şi venit când […] gândesc nu-şi găsesc alt correspondent în natură decât ascetismul sublim al unei mlaştini, al mării sau al unui munte. Şi poate că odată şi odată, chiar şi turistului de rând, ținuturi ca Islanda i se vor părea aşa cum azi i se par viile şi grădinile de mirt din Sudul Europei; poate că trecând din Alpi spre dunele nisipoase din Scheveningen, nici nu va lua în seamă Badenul şi Heidelbergul.

Chiar cel mai sever ascet simțea că îi este îngăduit să rătăcească pe Edgon Heath: de se lăsa pătruns de frumusețe, aceasta nu-l făcea să depăşească limitele rigorii. Oricine are

The most-thorough ascetic could feel that he had a natural right to wander on Egdon: he was keeping with the line of legitimate indulgence when he laid himself open to influences such as these. Colours and beauties so far subdued were, at least, the birthright of all. Only in summer days of highest feather did its mood touch the level of gaiety. Intensity was more usually reached by way of the solemn than by way of the brilliant, and such a sort of intensity was often arrived at during winter darkness, tempests and mists.

Then Egdon was aroused to reciprocity; for the storm was its lover and the wind its friend. Then it became the home of strange phantoms; and it was found to be the hitherto unrecognized original of those wild regions of obscurity which are vaguely felt to be compassing us about in midnight dreams of flight and disaster, and are never thought of after the dream till revived by scenes like this.

(in *The Return of the Native* 9-11)

dreptul legitim să se bucure de culori atât de discrete. Numai în cele mai însorite zile de vară, câmpia răspândea o timidă veselie. Peisajul îşi atingea plenitudinea mai cu seamă în nopțile de iarnă, pe timp de furtună şi pe ceață, mai mult prin solemnitate decât prin strălucire. Doar atunci îşi găsea Edgon Heath perechea, căci furtuna îi era iubită, iar vântul prieten. Devenea sălaşul unor ciudate fantome; descopereai deodată că după asemănarea lui erau plăsmuite acele ținuturi întunecoase şi nebuloase, în care ne zbatem când visăm grozăvii, ținuturi de care uităm apoi până ce ni le aduce aminte o priveliște ca aceasta.

[Traducere de Dana Crivăț, Editura Univers, București, 1970]

From *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886) is a tale about family life, responsibility and guilt, about faults that eventually claim their price. It is also the 'story of a man of character', Michael Henchard, who finds himself alone in his fight against his own nature and passions and who will try to go beyond his condition and assert himself as human being. But his whole struggle will be in vain and his efforts will come to nothing but misfortune. Initially, the reader is made to think that he will manage to overcome his faults and fate, but here again the hero will be crushed. This unfruitful and unsuccessful battle against tragic destiny gives the hero impressive stature and makes him the greatest and most tragic male character in Hardy's fiction. Unlike other novels, here the plot is more character-oriented, condensed and free from sentimentality and melodramatic episodes.

Will Anybody Buy Her?

The fragment below is the almost incredible scene when Michael Henchard, with his mind obliterated by too much drinking, in a moment of irresponsible behaviour sells his wife and child to a sailor, Newson. This is the mistake that will haunt him all his life and will make him struggle desperately and obstinately to overcome his feeling of guilt and rise to light again. But this is also the moment when his fate has been sealed for ever.

'Here—I am waiting to know about this offer of mine. The woman is no good to me. Who'll have her?'

The company had by this time decidedly degenerated, and the renewed inquiry was received with a laugh of appreciation.

—Ei, ce se-aude cu oferta mea? Aștept răspuns. Femeia asta nu-mi mai trebuie. Cine vrea s-o ia?

Dispoziția comesenilor se mai schimbase între timp sub influența băuturii, întrebarea bărbatului fu întâmpinată cu un

The woman whispered; she was imploring and anxious: 'Come, come, it is getting dark, and this nonsense won't do. If you don't come along, I shall go without you. Come!'

She waited and waited; yet he did not move. In ten minutes the man broke in upon the *desultory conversation of the *furmity drinkers with. 'I asked this question, and nobody answered to 't. Will any Jack Rag or Tom Straw among ye buy my goods?'

The woman's manner changed, and her face assumed the grim shape and colour of which mention has been made.

'Mike, Mike,' she said; 'this is getting serious. O!—too serious!'

'Will anybody buy her?' said the man.

'I wish somebody would,' said she firmly. 'Her present owner is not at all to her liking!'

'Nor you to mine,' said he. 'So we are agreed about that. Gentlemen, you hear? It's an agreement to part. She shall take the girl if she wants to, and go her ways. I'll take my tools, and go my ways. 'Tis simple as Scripture history. Now then, stand up, Susan, and show yourself.'

'Don't, my *chiel,' whispered a buxom *staylace dealer in voluminous petticoats, who sat near the woman; 'yer good man don't know what he's saying.'

The woman, however, did stand up. 'Now, who's

râs admirativ. Femeia șopti—era îngrijorată și-l implora:

—Hai, hai, acuși se întunecă și lasă prostiile astea. Dacă nu vii, să știi că plec fără tine. Hai să mergem.

Ea tot aștepta și aștepta, dar el nu se mișca. După alte zece minute, omul întrerupse din nou conversația dezordonată a băutorilor de rom:

—Am întrebat ceva și nu mi-a răspuns nimeni. Nu e nici unul dintre voi care să-mi cumpere marfa?

Atitudinea femeii se schimbă și figura ei luă o înfățișare mai întunecată.

—Mike, zise ea, mergi prea departe.

—Vrea s-o cumpere careva? Întrebă omul.

—Chiar aș vrea să mă ia cineva, zise femeia cu hotărâre. Stăpânul ce-l am acum nu-i deloc pe placul meu.

—Nici tu pe al meu, o repezi el. Așa că ne-am înțeles. Domnilor, ați auzit? Ne-am învoit să ne despărțim. N-are decât să-și ia copilul dacă vrea și să se ducă cu Dumnezeu. Eu îmi iau uneltele și-mi văd și eu de drumul meu. E simplu ca bună-ziua. Ei, hai, scoală-te, Susan, să te vadă lumea.

—Nu face asta fetițo, șopti o negustoreasă de dantele, o femeie durdulie, îmbrăcată cu multe fuste înfoiate, care stătea alături de nevasta scoasă la mezat. Bărbatul dumitale nu-și dă seama ce vorbește.

Femeia totuși se ridică.

auctioneer?' cried the hay-*trusser [Michael Henchard].

'I be,' promptly answered a short man, with a nose resembling a copper knob, a damp voice, and eyes like button-holes. 'Who'll make an offer for this lady?'

The woman looked on the ground, as if she maintained her position by a supreme effort of will.

'Five shillings,' said someone, at which there was a laugh.

'No insults,' said the husband. 'Who'll say a guinea?'

Nobody answered; and the female dealer in staylaces interposed.

'Behave yerself moral, good man, for Heaven's love! Ah, what a cruelty is the poor soul married to! Bed and board is dear at some figures 'pon my 'vation 'tis!'

'Set it higher, auctioneer,' said the trusser.

'Two guineas!' said the auctioneer; and no one replied.

'If they don't take her for that, in ten seconds they'll have to give more,' said the husband. 'Very well. Now auctioneer, add another.'

'Three guineas—going for three guineas!' said the *rheumy man.

'No bid?' said the husband. 'Good Lord, why she's cost me fifty times the money, if a penny. Go on.'

'Four guineas!' cried the auctioneer.

'I'll tell ye what—I won't sell her for less than five,' said the

—Ei, cine conduce licitația? strigă bărbatul.

—Eu, răspunse îndată un om îndesat, cu un nas ca o măciulie de aramă, o voce răgușită și ochi ca două butoniere. Cine face o ofertă pentru această doamnă?

Femeia privea în pământ, ca și cum s-ar fi ținut în picioare doar printr-un suprem efort de voință.

—Cinci șilingi, zise cineva, după care toți izbucniră în râs.

— Fără insulte, zise soțul. Cine dă o guiunee?

Nimeni nu răspunse și negustoreasa de dantele interveni:

—Poartă-te cum se cuvine, omu' lui Dumnezeu! Ah, cu ce călău s-a măritat biata fată! Tare scump plătesc unele pentru nu amărât de pat și o mâncare, zău dacă nu-i așa!

—Ridică prețul, omule, zise bărbatul.

—Doua guinee! Strigă conducătorul licitației, dar nimeni nu replică.

—Dacă nu vor s-o ia cu prețul ăsta, peste zece secunde vor trebui să dea mai mult, făcu soțul. Foarte bine, mai adăugă una.

—Trei guinee—se vinde cu trei guinee, anunță omul cu vocea răgușită.

—Nici o ofertă? Se miră soțul. Păi, ce Dumnezeu! Că pe mine m-a costat până acum de cincizeci de ori pe-atât. Zi mai departe.

—Patru guinee! strigă omul cel răguşit.

—Știți ce? N-o dau mai ieftin de cinci, se hotărî bărbatul, lăsându-și pumnul greu pe masă și făcând să sară din loc

husband, bringing down his fist so that the basins danced. 'I'll sell her for five guineas to any man that will pay me the money, and treat her well; and he shall have her for ever, and never hear *aught o' me. But she shan't go for less. Now then—five guineas—and she's yours. Susan, you agree?'

She bowed her head with absolute indifference.

'Five guineas,' said the auctioneer, 'or she'll be withdrawn. Do anybody give it? The last time. Yes or no?'

'Yes,' said a loud voice from the doorway.

All eyes were turned. Standing in the triangular opening which formed the door of the tent was a sailor, who, unobserved by the rest, had arrived there within the last two or three minutes. A dead silence followed his affirmation.

'You say you do?' asked the husband, staring at him.

'I say so,' replied the sailor.

'Saying is one thing, and paying is another. Where's the money?'

The sailor hesitated a moment, looked anew at the woman, came in, unfolded five crisp pieces of paper, and threw them down upon the tablecloth. They were Bank-of-England notes for five pounds. Upon the face of this he clinked down the shillings severally—one, two, three, four, five.

The sight of real money in full amount, in answer to a challenge for the same till then deemed slightly hypothetical had

castroanele. O vând pe cinci guinee oricui vrea să-mi dea banii și să se poarte bine cu ea; și poate s-o țină toată viața, că de mine n-o să mai audă. Da' cu mai puțin n-o dau. Ia să văd—cine dă cinci guinee—a si luat-o. Susan, te învoiești?

Ea dădu din cap cu o totală indiferență.

—Cinci guinee, anunță conducătorul licitației, sau o retragem. Dă cineva suma asta? E ultima ocazie. Da sau nu?

—Da, zise o voce din ușă.

Toți ochii se întoarseră în direcția aceea. În deschizătura triunghiulară care forma ușa cortului, stătea un marinar care, neobservat de nimeni, sosise acolo de câteva minute. O tăcere de moarte urmă afirmației lui.

—Zici că vrei s-o cumperi? Întrebă bărbatul, prinvindu-l uimit.

—Așa am zis, întări marinarul.

—Da' zisu e una, și plata e alta. Unde-s banii?

Marinarul șovăi o clipă, privi din nou femeia, apoi înaintă, desfăcu cinci hârtii foșnitoare și le aruncă pe masă. Erau bilete de bancă de câte o liră. Pe ele mai lăsă să cadă, una câte una, monedele de un șilling—una, două, trei, patru, cinci.

Vederea unor bani reali, ca răspuns la o ofertă care până atunci păruse cam problematică, avu un puternic efect asupra spectatorilor. Ochii lor rămaseră ațintiți pe fețele principalilor actori ai dramei; se întoarseră apoi spre hârtiile care stăteau pe

a great effect upon the spectators. Their eyes became riveted upon the faces of the chief actors, and then upon the notes as they lay, weighted by the shillings, on the table.

Up to this moment it could not positively have been asserted that the man, in spite of his tantalizing declaration, was really in earnest. The spectators had indeed taken the proceedings throughout as a piece of mirthful irony carried to extremes; and had assumed that, being out of work, he was, as a consequence, out of temper with the world, and society, and his nearest kin. But with the demand and response of real cash the jovial frivolity of the scene departed. A lurid colour seemed to fill the tent, and change the aspect of all therein. The *mirth-*wrinkles left the listeners' faces, and they waited with parting lips.

'Now,' said the woman, breaking the silence, so that her low dry voice sounded quite loud, 'before you go further, Michael, listen to me. If you touch that money, I and this girl go with the man. Mind, it is a joke no longer.'

'A joke? Of course it is not a joke!' shouted her husband, his resentment rising at her suggestion. 'I take the money; the sailor takes you. That's plain enough. It has been done elsewhere—and why not here?'

" 'Tis quite on the understanding that the young woman is willing,' said the sailor blandly. 'I wouldn't hurt her feelings for the world.'

masă, apăsate de metalul monedelor.

Până în acel moment, nu s-ar fi putut afirma cu siguranță că omul, în ciuda declarației lui provocatoare, vorbea serios. Spectatorii luaseră vorbele lui ca o glumă, dusă ceva cam prea departe, și gândeau că omul, fiind fără lucru, era supărat pe lume, și pe societate, și pe însăşi familia lui. Dar cu cererea și oferta în bani adevărați, veselia uşuratică ce stăpânea spiritele se destrămă cu totul. O lumină lividă părea că umple cortul și schimbă înfățișarea tuturor celor dinăuntru. Urmele râsului pieriră de pe fețele ascultătorilor și acum aşteptau cu gurile căscate.

—Acum, zise femeia, rupând tăcerea cu vocea ei joasă, uscată, ce răsună destul de tare, înainte de a merge mai departe, ascultă-mă, Michael. Dacă te atingi de banii lui, eu și copilul ne ducem cu omul ăsta. Bagă de seamă că nu mai e vorba de glumă.

—Glumă? Bineînțeles că nu-i de glumă! Strigă bărbatul, stârnit din nou de vorbele ei. Eu iau banii, marinarul te ia pe tine. E destul de limpede. S-a mai făcut și în alte părți—de ce nu s-ar face și aici?

—Numai cu condiția ca și tânăra nevastă să fie de acord, zise marinarul cu blândețe. N-aș vrea pentru nimic în lume s-o supăr.

—Nici eu, răspunse soțul. Dar ea se învoiește, cu condiția să poată lua și copilul. Așa mi-a spus mai zilele trecute, când am vorbit despre asta.

'Faith, nor I,' said her husband. 'But she is willing, provided she can have the child. She said so only the other day when I talked o't!'

'That you swear?' said the sailor to her.

'I do,' said she, after glancing at her husband's face and seeing no repentance there.

'Very well, she shall have the child, and the bargain's complete,' said the trusser. He took the sailor's notes and deliberately folded them, and put them with the shillings in a high remote pocket, with an air of finality.

The sailor looked at the woman and smiled. 'Come along!' he said kindly. 'The little one too—the more the merrier!' She paused for an instant, with a close glance at him. Then dropping her eyes again, and saying nothing, she took up the child and followed him as he made towards the door. On reaching it, she turned, and pulling off her wedding-ring, flung it across the booth in the hay-trusser's face.

'Mike,' she said, 'I've lived with thee a couple of years, and had nothing but temper! Now I'm no more to 'ee; I'll try my luck elsewhere. 'Twill be better for me and Elizabeth-Jane, both. So good-bye!'

Seizing the sailor's arm with her right hand, and mounting the little girl on her left, she went out of the tent sobbing bitterly.

A *stolid look of concern filled the husband's face, as if, after

—Juri că e așa? o întrebă marinarul.

— Jur, zise ea, după ce privi la bărbatul ei, pe fața căruia nu văzu nici o urmă de căință.

—Foarte bine, să ia copilul, și cu asta am încheiat târgul, zise soțul.

Luă de pe masă bancnotele marinarului, le împături cu hotărâre și le puse împreună cu șilingii într-un buzunar de sus din căptușeala hainei, dând gestului un caracter definitiv.

Marinarul se uită la femeie și zâmbi.

—Hai să mergem! îi spuse blând. Ia-o și pe cea mică—cu cât mai mulți, cu atât mai bine!

Ea se opri pentru a-l privi mai de aproape. Apoi, plecându-și din nou ochii și nemaispunând nici un cuvânt, își luă fetița și-l urmă pe bărbatul ce se îndrepta spre ușă. Ajungând acolo, se întoarse și, scoțându-și de pe deget verigheta, o aruncă de-a lungul barăcii.

—Mike, vorbi ea, am trăit cu tine toți anii ăștia, și n-am avut parte de o vorbă bună. Acum nu mai sunt nevasta ta și o să-mi caut norocul aiurea. Poate o să fie mai bine și pentru mine și pentru Elizabeth-Jane. Așa că rămâi sănătos!

Luând brațul marinarului cu mâna dreaptă și cu stânga ținându-și fetița, ieși din cort, plângând amar.

O expresie grea de îngrijorare se citi pe chipul bărbatului, ca și cum, de fapt, nu prevăzuse acest sfârșit; câțiva dintre

all, he had not quite anticipated this ending; and some of the guests laughed.

'Is she gone?' he said.

'Faith, ay! she's gone clane enough,' said some rustics near the door.

(in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* 10-3)

comeseni izbucniră în râs.

—S-a dus? întrebă el.

—Păi sigur, s-a dus de-a binelea, ziseră câțiva țărani așezați mai aproape de ușă.

[Traducere de Liliana Pamfil-Teodoreanu, Editura Univers, București, 1985]

Do You Forgive Me?

The extract below contains the beginning of the last phase of Fate's destruction of Michael Henchard, now a rich and respected grain merchant and mayor of Casterbridge. After eighteen years, his wife, Susan, and her daughter, Elizabeth-Jane, return to him. The scene below is the painful moment when the two meet after this long and traumatic separation.

Neither spoke just at first—there was no necessity for speech—and the poor woman leant against Henchard, who supported her in his arms.

'I don't drink,' he said in a low, halting, apologetic voice. 'You hear, Susan?—I don't drink now—I haven't since that night.' Those were his first words.

He felt her bow her head in acknowledgment that she understood. After a minute or two he again began:

'If I had known you were living, Susan! But there was every reason to suppose you and the child were dead and gone. I took every possible step to find you—travelled—advertised. My opinion at last was that you had started for some colony with that man, and had been drowned on your voyage. Why did you keep silent like this?'

'O Michael! because of him—what other reason could there be? I thought I owed him faithfulness to the end of one of our lives—foolishly I believed there was something solemn and

Nici unul dintre ei nu vorbi—nu era nevoie de vorbe—iar sărmana femeie se aplecă spre Henchard, care o prinse în brațe.

—Nu mai beau, spuse el cu o voce joasă, întretăiată de emoție. Mă auzi, Susan? Nu mai beau deloc. N-am mai pus gura pe băutură din noaptea aceea.

Acestea au fost primele lui cuvinte. O simți aplecându-și capul în semn de înțelegere. După câteva clipe începu din nou:

—Dacă aș fi știut că trăiești, Susan! Dar aveam toate motivele să cred că și tu și copilul v-ați prăpădit. Am încercat tot ce se putea omenește face ca să te găsesc—am călătorit—am dat anunțuri. Credeam că ai plecat în vreo colonie cu omul acela și că ați pierit într-un naufragiu. De ce n-ai dat nici un semn de viață?

—O, Michael! Din cauza lui—ce alt motiv aș fi putut avea? Credeam că-i datorez credință până la moartea unuia din noi; ca o proastă am crezut că vânzarea aceea era un lucru legiuit, care mă lega de el pe vecie. Credeam că nu se cuvine să-l părăsesc,

binding in the bargain; I thought that even in honour I dared not desert him when he had paid so much for me in good faith. I meet you now only as his widow—I consider myself that, and that I have no claim upon you. Had he not died I should never have come—never! Of that you may be sure.'

'Ts-s-s! How could you be so simple?'

'I don't know. Yet it would have been very wicked—if I had not thought like that!' said Susan, almost crying.

'Yes—yes—so it would. It is only that which makes me feel 'ee an innocent woman. But—to lead me into this!'

'What, Michael?' she asked, alarmed.

'Why, this difficulty about our living together again, and Elizabeth-Jane. She cannot be told all—she would so despise us both that—I could not bear it!'

'That was why she was brought up in ignorance of you. I could not bear it either.'

'Well—we must talk of a plan for keeping her in her present belief, and getting matters straight in spite of it. You have heard I am in a large way of business here—that I am Mayor of the town, and churchwarden, and I don't know what all?'

'Yes,' she murmured.

'These things, as well as the dread of the girl discovering our disgrace, makes it necessary to act with extreme caution. So that I don't see how you two can return openly to my house as the

când el plătise așa de mult pentru mine, cu bună credință. Acum am venit la tine ca văduva lui—așa mă socot și știu că n-am nici un drept asupra ta. Daca n-ar fi murit, n-aș fi venit niciodată, poți să fii sigur de asta.

—Ț,ț, tț! Cum poți să fii așa de naivă?

—Nu știu. Ar fi fost foarte urât din partea mea—dacă nu gândeam așa, mărturisi Susan aproape plângând.

—Da, da—așa ar fi fost. Numai asta mă face să te privesc ca pe o femeie cinstită. Dar—să mă bagi într-o asemenea încurcatură!

—Ce încurcătură, Michael?! întrebă ea alarmată.

—Păi, cum să facem să trăim împreună din nou? Și Elizabeth-Jane... Ei nu putem să-i spunem—ne-ar dispreţui pe amândoi—și n-aș putea îndura asta!

—De aceea am crescut-o așa, fără să știe nimic de tine. Nici eu nu puteam să îndur așa ceva.

—Ei bine, atunci să ne gândim la un plan ca ea să nu afle mai multe decât știe acum, și totuși să îndreptăm situația. Ai auzit că învârt afaceri însemnate aici—că sunt primar al orașului, epitrop al bisericii și multe altele.

—Da, șopti ea.

—Acestea toate, precum și teama ca fata să nu descopere rușinea noastră, ne impun să procedăm cu mare băgare de seamă. Așa că nu prea văd cum voi două v-ați putea întoarce în

wife and daughter I once treated badly, and banished from me; and there's the rub o't.'

'We'll go away at once. I only came to see—

'No, no, Susan; you are not to go—you mistake me!' he said with kindly severity. 'I have thought of this plan: that you and Elizabeth take a cottage in the town as the widow Mrs Newson and her daughter; that I meet you, court you, and marry you. Elizabeth-Jane coming to my house as my step-daughter. The thing is so natural and easy that it is half done in thinking o't. This would leave my shady, headstrong, disgraceful life as a young man absolutely unopened; the secret would be yours and mine only; and I should have the pleasure of seeing my own only child under my roof, as well as my wife.'

'I am quite in your hands, Michael,' she said meekly. 'I came here for the sake of Elizabeth; for myself, if you tell me to leave again to-morrow morning, and never come near you more, I am content to go.'

'Now, now; we don't want to hear that,' said Henchard gently. 'Of course you won't leave again. Think over the plan I have proposed for a few hours; and if you can't hit upon a better one we'll adopt it. I have to be away for a day or two on business, unfortunately; but during that time you can get lodgings—the only ones in the town fit for you are those over the china-shop in High Street—and you can also look for a cottage.'

casa mea, pe față, ca soția și fiica pe care le-am tratat cândva așa de rău și le-am izgonit de lângă mine; vezi, asta-i buba.

—Putem pleca numaidecât. Am venit numai să te văd.

—Nu, nu, Susan, nu trebuie să pleci, m-ai înțeles greșit, vorbi el cu blândă autoritate. M-am gândit la următorul plan: Tu și cu Elizabeth-Jane să luați cu chirie o căsută în orașul ăsta, sub numele de doamne Newson, o văduvă cu fiica ei; eu să te întâlnesc, să-ți fac curte și să te iau de nevastă, iar Elizabeth-Jane să vină în casa noastră, ca fiică vitregă. Lucrul e așa de ușor și de firesc, că îmi pare aproape îndeplinit, numai gândindu-mă la el. Tinerețea mea întunecată, zăpăcită și plină de ruine ar rămâne astfel îngropată pe veci; taina ar rămâne numai între noi și aș avea bucuria să-mi văd singurul copil sub acoperișul meu, împreună cu nevasta.

—Fă cum crezi tu că e mai bine, Michael, zise ea supusă; cât despre mine, dacă-mi spui să plec mâine dimineață și să nu mă mai apropii de tine vreodată, mă duc bucuros.

—Stai, stai, nu vreau să aud vorbe de-astea, zise Henchard cu blândețe. Bineînțeles că nu trebuie să pleci iar. Gândește-te la planul pe care ți l-am spus astă-seară și vezi dacă nu-ți vine în minte unul mai bun. Din păcate, eu trebuie să lipsesc din oraș o zi-două, cu treburi, dar în acest timp tu poți să găsești o locuință. Singura din oraș potrivită pentru voi este cea de deasupra magazinului cu porțelanuri din Strada Mare—și poți să te

'If the lodgings are in High Street they are dear, I suppose?'

'Never mind—you *must* start genteel if our plan is to be carried out. Look to me for money. Have you enough till I come back?'

'Quite,' said she.

'And are you comfortable at the inn?'

'O yes.'

'And the girl is quite safe from learning the shame of her case and ours?—that's what makes me most anxious of all.'

'You would be surprised to find how unlikely she is to dream of the truth. How could she ever suppose such a thing?'

True!

'I like the idea of repeating our marriage,' said Mrs Henchard, after a pause. 'It seems the only right course, after all this. Now I think I must go back to Elizabeth-Jane, and tell her that our kinsman, Mr Henchard, kindly wishes us to stay in the town.'

'Very well—arrange that yourself. I'll go some way with you.'

'No, no. Don't run any risk!' said his wife anxiously. 'I can find my way back—it is not late. Please let me go alone.'

'Right,' said Henchard. 'But just one word. Do you forgive me, Susan?'

She murmured something; but seemed to find it difficult to

interesezi și de o casă.

—Dacă locuința aceea se află în Strada Mare, trebuie să fie scumpă, îmi închipui.

—Nu contează—trebuie să apari în oraș ca o doamnă de condiție bună, dacă vrem să ne punem planul în aplicare. Am eu grijă de bani. Ai destui până mă întorc eu?

—Destui, zise ea.

—Și stați bine la han?

—Da, bineînțeles.

—Și fata e bine ferită, ca să nu afle rușinea poveștii ei și a noastră? Asta mă îngrijorează mai mult ca orice.

—Te-ar mira și pe tine să vezi că nici măcar nu visează care-i adevărul. Cum ar putea să-i treacă prin minte așa ceva?

—Foarte bine!

—Îmi place ideea de a ne căsători din nou, afirmă doamna Henchard după o pauză. Pare singura cale cinstită, după cele întâmplate. Acum cred că trebuie să mă întorc la Elizabeth-Jane și să-i spun că ruda noastră, domnul Henchard, a avut bunătatea să ne invite să stăm aici.

—Foarte bine—aranjează tu asta. Am să te însoțesc o bucată de drum.

—Nu, nu. Nu trebuie să riști nimic, protestă soția lui, grijulie. Știu eu să mă întorc. Nu e târziu. Te rog, lasă-mă să plec singură. Bine, zise Henchard. Dar—vreau să-ți mai spun ceva. Mă ierți,

frame her answer.

'Never mind—all in good time,' said he. 'Judge me by my future works—good-bye!'

He retreated, and stood at the upper side of the Amphitheatre while his wife passed out through the lower way, and descended under the trees to the town. Then Henchard himself went homeward, going so fast that by the time he reached his door he was almost upon the heels of the unconscious woman from whom he had just parted. He watched her up the street, and turned into his house.

(in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* 83-6)

Susan?

—Ea murmură ceva, dar parcă îi era greu să închege un răspuns.

—Nu face nimic—toate la timpul lor, zise el. Să mă judeci după faptele mele viitoare—la revedere.

El se retrase și stătu în partea de sus a amfiteatrului, în timp ce soția lui pornea pe poteca de jos și se afunda sub copacii orașului. Apoi Henchard însuși se îndreptă spre casă, mergând așa de repede, încât până ajunse în fața porții sale, se trezi aproape în spatele femeii de care abia se despărțise. O privi cum se depărta spre Strada Mare și apoi intră în casă.

[Traducere de Liliana Pamfil-Teodoreanu, Editura Univers, București, 1985]

From *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

Tess of the d'Urbervilles (1891) is Hardy's most ambitious tragic novel. Its heroine, Tess, is the hopeless victim of two men: Alec d'Urbeyfield, the son of her employer, a member of a well-off family of upstarts and Angel Clare, a man who thinks of himself of being liberated of all prejudices. It is a novel of ill-fortune and human errors. It is also the novel of a woman who dramatically strives to be happy, but no matter what she does, happiness is something that she will never be allowed to reach.

Tess is a very emotional novel in which everything is fated, and everything has to follow its appointed course. Alec is the diabolic villain in everything he does; Angel is quite insipid, and his inflexibility causes Tess much of her suffering. He thinks that he has an independent judgement, but he is still slave to custom and conventionality. Tess is the sacrificial lamb and was, obviously, constructed in such a way as to serve the author's purpose. She is no ideal of chastity and innocence, but a girl, 'simple, sensuous and passionate' who has never been able to come to terms with the world around her. She is the victim of her own series of mistakes and of adverse fortune, but to consider her a mere deliberate victim of divine sadism would mean to go too far and to misinterpret Hardy's point.

The Vale of Blakemore

As pointed out above, one of Hardy powers is in depicting vast, solemn landscapes. What impresses the reader in these pictures is their geographic precision; they are the product of a keen and sensitive observer who perceives things with both analytic and impassioned awareness. The passage below extracted from the beginning of the novel is a fine example of Hardy's descriptive technique as he depicts the picturesque neighbourhood of the village of Marlott, the cradle of Tess's innocence (Galea 194).

The village of Marlott lay amid the north-eastern undulations of the beautiful Vale of Blakemore or Blackmoor aforesaid, an *engirdled and secluded region, for the most part *untrodden as yet by tourist or landscape-painter, though within a four hours' journey from London.

It is a vale whose acquaintance is best made by viewing it from the summits of the hills that surround it—except perhaps during the droughts of summer. An anguished *ramble into its recesses in bad weather is apt to engender dissatisfaction with its narrow, *tortuous and miry ways.

This fertile and sheltered tract of country, in which the fields are never brown and the springs never dry, is bounded on the south by the bold chalk *ridge that embraces the prominences of Hambledon Hill, Bulbarrow, Nettlecombe-Tout, Dogbury, High Stoy, and Bibb Down. The traveller from the coast, who, after *plodding northward for a score of miles over calcareous *downs and corn-lands, suddenly reaches the verge of one of these *escarpments, is surprised and delighted to behold, extended like a map beneath him, a country differing absolutely from that he has passed through. Behind him the hills are open, the sun blazes down upon the fields so large as to give an unenclosed character to the landscape, the lanes are white, the hedges low and *plashed, the atmosphere colourless. Here, in the valley, the world seems to be constructed upon a smaller and more delicate

Satul Marlott e pitit printre povârnişurile de la miazănoapte şi răsărit ale frumoasei văi Blakemore sau Blackmoor, despre care a mai fost vorba, o regiune izolată, înconjurată de dealuri; deşi regiunea se află doar la câteva ore distanță de Londra, rareori se întâmplă să calce pe aci picior de turist sau de pictor.

Cel mai bine e să faci cunoştință cu ea privind-o de sus, din vârful dealurilor care o înconjoară, căci – cu excepția zilelor secetoase de vară – de obicei drumurile ei strâmbe, întortocheate şi mocirloase nu sunt prea plăcute pentru cel ce se încumetă pînă într-acolo fără călăuză.

Ținutul acesta roditor şi adăpostit, cu câmpii care nu sunt niciodată arse de secetă şi izvoare care nu seacă niciodată, e străjuit la miazăzi de o abruptă creastă calcaroasă formată din vârfurile Hambledon Hill, Bulbarrow Nettlecombe-Tout, Dogbury, High Stoy şi Bubb Down. După ce a străbătut cu greu câteva zeci de kilometri către miazănoapte printre dealuri calcaroase şi culturi de porumb, drumețul care vine dinspre malul mării ajunge la marginea unuia dintre aceste povârnişuri; surprins şi fermecat, el vede dintr-o dată desfăşurându-se la picioarele lui, ca o hartă, o întreagă regiune, care se deosebeşte cu totul de cea pe unde a trecut nu de mult. Apoi, dealurile rămân în urmă. Soarele străluceşte acum deasupra unor câmpii atât de întinse, încât priveliştea pare nețărmurită, cu drumuri

scale; the fields are mere *paddocks, so reduced that from this height their *hedgerows appear a network of dark green threads overspreading the paler green of the grass. The atmosphere beneath is languorous, and is so *tinged with azure that what artists call the middle distance *partakes also of that hue, while the horizon beyond is of the deepest ultramarine. Arable lands are few and limited; but with slight exceptions the prospect is a broad rich mass of grass and trees, *mantling minor hills and *dales within the major. Such is the Vale of Blackmoor.

(in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* 18-19)

albe şi garduri vii, joase. Atmosfera e incoloră. Aici în vale, lumea apare concepută pe o scară mai redusă, iar lucrurile sunt mai gingaşe. Câmpiile s-au transformat în păşuni, atât de mici, încât dacă le priveşti de sus, de pe dealuri, gardurile vii care le înconjoară formează o plasă de un verde-închis care se întinde peste verdele mai deschis al ierbii. Jos în vale, totul e cufundat în visare, iar văzduhul e atât de azuriu, încât planul al doilea, cum îl numesc artiştii, e scăldat şi el în această nuanță, în timp ce orizontul se pierde într-un albastru puternic. Pământuri arabile sunt puține şi nu prea întinse. Cu mici excepții, priveliştea oferă ochilor o masă imensă şi bogată de iarbă şi de pomi, care înveşmântează ca o haină dealurile şi văile mai mici, contopindu-le într-o singură vale adâncă—Blackmoor.

[Traducere de Catina Ralea și Eugenia Cîncea, Editura Univers, București, 1982]

Another Woman in Your Shape

Angel Clare and Tess have decided to confess their faults immediately after their marriage. His is the first and he reveals to her his 'eight-and-forty hours' dissipation with a stranger' while he was in London. Tess's avowal of her affair with Alec d'Urbervilles and their illegitimate baby follows. Angel considers himself a man freed of all prejudices; but his attitude, after his marriage with Tess, now that he has learned about her past, proves quite the contrary—he decides he cannot accept her so ('a guilty woman in the guise of an innocent one') and, consequently, abandons her. The excerpt below is the dramatic moment immediately following Tess's honest confession. This is a crucial moment when all of Tess's subsequent behaviour has been preset and she has been directed unmistakably towards her doom. Just like Alec, Angel does not act for himself but is made to act as a mere tool in the hands of Blind Destiny.

Her narrative ended; even its re-assertions and secondary explanations were done. Tess's voice throughout had hardly risen higher than its opening tone; there had been no *exculpatory phrase of any kind, and she had not wept.

But the complexion even of external things seemed to suffer transmutation as her announcement progressed. The fire in the *grate looked *impish—demoniacally funny, as if it did not care in the least about her *strait. The *fender grinned idly, as if it too did not care. The light from the water-bottle was merely engaged in a chromatic problem. All material objects around announced their irresponsibility with terrible iteration. And yet nothing had changed since the moments when he had been kissing her; or rather, nothing in the substance of things. But the essence of

Tess sfârşise povestea; repetase chiar unele amănunte şi dăduse şi o serie de lămuriri suplimentare. Vocea ei abia se ridicase deasupra tonului inițial; nu încercase să se dezvinovățească în nici un fel, şi nu vărsase nici o lacrimă.

Dar pe măsură ce depănase firul povestirii, aspectul lucrurilor din jur parcă se transformase. Focul din vatră avea un aer răutăcios şi semăna cu un drăcuşor care-şi râdea de ea, fără să-i pese de suferința ei. Paravanul din fața sobei rânjea nepăsător şi leneş, iar cana cu apă, luminată de foc, părea absorbită doar de jocul de culori. Toate obiectele materiale din cameră îşi arătau nepăsarea cu o înverşunată încăpățânare. Şi cu toate astea, din clipa în care Angel o sărutase, nu se schimbase nimic, sau în orice caz nimic din natura însăşi a lucrurilor. Se

things had changed.

When she ceased, the *auricular impressions from their previous *endearments seemed to *hustle away into the corner of their brains, repeating themselves as echoes from a time of supremely *purblind foolishness.

Clare performed the irrelevant act of stirring the fire; the intelligence had not even yet got to the bottom of him. After stirring the embers he rose to his feet; all the force of her disclosure had imparted itself now. His face had withered. In the strenuousness of his concentration he *treadled fitfully on the floor. He could not, by any *contrivance, think closely enough; that was the meaning of his vague movement. When he spoke it was in the most inadequate, commonplace voice of the many varied tones she had heard from him.

'Tess!'

'Yes, dearest.'

'Am I to believe this? From your manner I am to take it as true. O you cannot be out of your mind! You ought to be! Yet you are not… My wife, my Tess—nothing in you warrants such a supposition as that?'

'I am not out of my mind,' she said.

'And yet—He looked vacantly at her, to resume with *dazed senses: 'Why didn't you tell me before? Ah, yes, you would have told me, in a way—but I hindered you, I remember!'

schimbase însă esenţa lor.

După ce termină povestea, cuvintele de iubire pe care le şoptiseră mai înainte părură că se îngrămădesc într-un colţ al creierului lor, repetându-se ca un ecou al unor momente de nebunie oarbă.

Clare se aplecă să aţâţe focul, fără să-şi dea seama cât de nepotrivit era gestul, căci nu se dezmeticise încă bine după cele auzite. Scormoni jăratecul din cămin, apoi se ridică în picioare. Îl izbea acum toată grozăvia destăinuirii lui Tess. Se întunecase la faţă şi se plimba furios prin cameră, străduindu-se să-şi adune gândurile. Dar oricât s-ar fi străduit, nu reuşea cu nici un chip. Nu-şi mai găsea astâmpăr. Cind se hotărî, în sfârşit, să vorbească, o făcu pe un ton cu totul neaşteptat, tonul cel mai banal cu care i se adresase vreodată.

—Tess!

—Da, iubitule.

—Să fie oare adevărat? După felul în care mi-ai vorbit, trebuie să cred că-i adevărat, că doar nu eşti nebună. Mai bine ai fi! Dar totuşi, nu eşti... ! Soţia mea…Tess a mea! Mă uit la tine, dar nu văd nimic care să îndreptăţească o asemenea bănuială.

—Nu sunt nebună, spuse Tess.

—Şi cu toate astea... O privi cu ochi pierduţi, apoi continuă, ca năuc: De ce nu mi-ai spus nimic până acum? Ah, da, îmi aduc aminte... ai vrut tu odată să-mi spui ceva, dar nu te-am lăsat!

These and other of his words were nothing but the *perfunctory *babble of the surface while the depths remained paralyzed. He turned away, and bent over a chair. Tess followed him to the middle of the room, where he was, and stood there staring at him with eyes that did not weep. Presently she slid down upon her knees beside his foot, and from this position she crouched in a heap.

'In the name of our love, forgive me!' she whispered with a dry mouth. 'I have forgiven you for the same!'

And, as he did not answer, she said again—

'Forgive me as you are forgiven! *I* forgive *you*, Angel.'

'You—yes, you do.'

'But you do not forgive me?'

'O Tess, forgiveness does not apply to the case! You were one person; now you are another. My God—how can forgiveness meet such a grotesque—prestidigitation as that!'

He paused, contemplating this definition; then suddenly broke into horrible laughter—as unnatural and ghastly as a laugh in hell.

'Don't—don't! It kills me quite, that!' she shrieked. 'O have mercy upon me—have mercy!'

He did not answer; and, sickly white, she jumped up.

'Angel, Angel! what do you mean by that laugh?' she cried out. 'Do you know what this is to me?'

Cuvintele astea şi altele pe care le rosti nu erau altceva decât o vorbărie goală, superficială, căci străfundurile sufletului lui zăceau încă paralizate. Angel se întoarse şi se sprijini de un scaun. Tess îl urmă până în mijlocul camerei şi rămase aşa, uitându-se la el cu ochi mari din care nu curgea nici o lacrimă.

Apoi se lăsă în genunchi, ghemuindu-se la picioarele lui.

—În numele dragostei noastre, iartă-mă, şopti ea cu gura uscată. Şi eu te-am iertat pentru acelaşi păcat.

Dar cum Angel nu-i răspunse, Tess se rugă iar:

—Iartă-mă, aşa cum te-am iertat şi eu! Căci te-am iertat, Angel.

—Da... da, asta aşa e!

—Şi tu nu mă ierţi?

—Iertarea n-are ce căuta aici, Tess. Până acum erai o fiinţă, acum eşti alta. Ah, Dumnezeule, cum poţi să-ţi închipui că iertarea s-ar putea potrivi cu o... scamatorie atât de grotescă!

Angel se opri să se gândească la definiţia pe care o enunţase, apoi deodată izbucni într-un râs sinistru – nefiresc şi înfricoşător, ca râsetele iadului.

—Nu, nu... te rog! Mă ucizi cu râsul ăsta! strigă ea. Fie-ţi milă de mine... fie-ţi milă!

Angel nu spuse nimic, iar Tess, albă ca varul, sări în picioare.

—Angel, Angel, ce vrea să zică râsul ăsta? strigă ea. Îţi

He shook his head.

'I have been hoping, longing, praying, to make you happy! I have thought what joy it will be to do it, what an unworthy wife I shall be if I do not! That's what I have felt, Angel!'

'I know that.'

'I thought, Angel, that you loved me—me, my very self! If it is I you do love, O how can it be that you look and speak so? It frightens me! Having begun to love you, I love you for ever—in all changes, in all disgraces, because you are yourself. I ask no more. Then how can you, O my own husband, stop loving me?'

'I repeat, the woman I have been loving is not you.'

'But who?'

'Another woman in your shape.'

(in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* 247-9)

dai seama ce înseamnă toate astea pentru mine?

Angel dădu din cap.

—Nădăjduiam, doream şi mă rugam lui Dumnezeu să te fac fericit! Mă gândeam adesea cât de bucuroasă aş fi dacă aş reuşi, şi ce soţie netrebnică aş fi dacă aş da greş. Asta gândeam eu, Angel!

—Ştiu !

—Am crezut că mă iubeşti, Angel, că mă iubeşti pe mine, aşa cum sunt. Şi dacă mă iubeşti, cum se poate să te uiţi aşa la mine şi să-mi vorbeşti cum îmi vorbeşti? Mă sperii! Eu, când m-am îndrăgostit de tine, m-am îndrăgostit pentru totdeauna, orice s-ar întâmpla, chiar dacă te-ai acoperi de ruşine, pentru că te iubesc aşa cum eşti. Şi atunci cum de poţi, tu, soţul meu, să nu mă mai iubeşti?

—Ţi-am mai spus o dată. Nu eşti tu femeia pe care am iubit-o.

—Dar atunci cine?

—O altă femeie, cu înfăţişarea ta.

[Traducere de Catina Ralea şi Eugenia Cîncea, Editura Univers, Bucureşti, 1982]

Too Late

If the preceding scene was one of abandonment, the one inserted below is one of meeting again, in no less dramatic and not very different circumstances. Angel Clare, conciliatory and repentant of his behaviour, returns from Brazil, the country of his self-exile, where he has become a preacher driven by a stage of religious zeal. But meanwhile Tess has once again been thrown into the path of Alec d'Urberville, and it is too late to make amends. This is another crucial moment in the victimisation of Tess—her subsequent desperate gesture of murdering Alec in a last attempt to liberate herself will bring about her ultimate downfall.

Tess appeared on the threshold—not at all as he had expected to see her—bewilderingly otherwise, indeed. Her great natural beauty was, if not heightened, rendered more obvious by her attire. She was loosely wrapped in a cashmere dressing-gown of gray-white, embroidered in half-mourning tints, and she wore slippers of the same hue. Her neck rose out of a *frill of *down, and her well-remembered cable of dark-brown hair was partially coiled up in a mass at the back of her head and partly hanging on her shoulder—the evident result of haste.

He had held out his arms, but they had fallen again to his side; for she had not come forward, remaining still in the opening of the doorway. Mere yellow skeleton that he was now, he felt the contrast between them, and thought his appearance distasteful to her.

'Tess!' he said huskily, 'can you forgive me for going away?

Tess se ivi în prag. Nu arăta deloc aşa cum se aşteptase el, ci cu totul altfel, uimitor de schimbată. Poate că nu era mai frumoasă, dar îmbrăcămintea îi scotea şi mai mult în evidență farmecul trăsăturilor. Tess se îmbrăcase în grabă într-o rochie de casă din caşmir fumuriu-deschis, brodată cu nuanțe de semidoliu, iar în picioare purta papuci de aceeaşi culoare. În jurul gâtului avea un guleraş de puf, iar părul ei castaniu-închis, de care Angel îşi amintea atât de bine, era strâns la ceafă şi doar câteva şuvițe care-i cădeau pe umeri arătau graba cu care se îmbrăcase.

Angel întinsese brațele spre ea, dar le lăsă să cadă, căci Tess nu înaintase către el ci rămăsese în pragul uşii. Ştiind că era galben la față şi slab ca un schelet, îşi dădu imediat seama de deosebirea dintre ei şi se gândi că înfățişarea lui o dezgustase, poate.

Can't you—come to me? How do you get to be—like this?'

'It is too late,' said she, her voice sounding hard through the room, her eyes shining unnaturally.

'I did not think rightly of you—I did not see you as you were!' he continued to plead. 'I have learnt to since, dearest Tessy mine!'

'Too late, too late!' she said, waving her hand in the impatience of a person whose tortures cause every instant to seem an hour. 'Don't come close to me, Angel! No—you must not. Keep away.'

'But don't you love me, my dear wife, because I have been so pulled down by illness? You are not so *fickle—I am come on purpose for you—my mother and father will welcome you now!'

'Yes—O, yes, yes! But I say, I say it is too late.'

She seemed to feel like a fugitive in a dream, who tries to move away, but cannot. 'Don't you know all—don't you know it? Yet how do you come here if you do not know?'

'I inquired here and there, and I found the way.'

'I waited and waited for you,' she went on, her tones suddenly resuming their old *fluty pathos. 'But you did not come! And I wrote to you, and you did not come! He kept on saying you would never come any more, and that I was a foolish woman. He was very kind to me, and to mother, and to all of us after father's death. He—

'I don't understand.'

—Tess, spuse el cu o voce răguşită, poţi oare să mă ierţi c-am plecat? Nu vrei... să te-ntorci la mine? Cum se face că... că eşti aşa?

—E prea târziu! răspunse ea, cu voce seacă. Avea o lucire ciudată în ochi.

—Te-am judecat greşit... Nu te-am cunoscut cu-adevărat, continuă el pe un ton rugător. Dar mi-am dat seama între timp, iubita mea.

—E prea târziu, prea târziu! răspunse ea, făcând cu mâna un gest de nerăbdare, ca un om care suferă cumplit şi pentru care clipele par nesfârşite. Nu te-apropia de mine, Angel! Nu... nu trebuie. Stai acolo unde eşti!

—Soţia mea dragă, se poate oare să nu mă mai iubeşti fiindcă sunt doborât de boală? Nu, tu nu poţi fi atât de uşuratică... Am venit să te iau cu mine. Numai pentru asta am venit. Tata şi mama o să te primească acum cu braţele deschise.

—Da... Ah, da, da! Dar ţi-am spus, ţi-am spus că-i prea târziu.

Tess se simţea ca un om care visează că-i fugărit, dar nu poate să se urnească din loc.

—Nu ştii ce s-a întâmplat... nu ştii? Atunci cum de-ai venit aici, dacă nu ştii?

—Am întrebat pe unul şi pe altul, şi am găsit drumul.

—Te-am aşteptat, te-am aşteptat... urmă Tess şi deodată

'He has won me back to him.'

Clare looked at her keenly, then, gathering her meaning, *flagged like one plague-stricken, and his glance sank; it fell on her hands, which, once rosy, were now white and more delicate.

She continued—

'He is upstairs. I hate him now, because he told me a lie—that you would not come again; and you *have* come! These clothes are what he's put upon me: I didn't care what he did *wi' me! But—will you go away, Angel, please, and never come any more?'

They stood fixed, their baffled hearts looking out of their eyes with a joylessness pitiful to see. Both seemed to implore something to shelter them from reality.

'Ah—it is my fault!' said Clare.

But he could not get on. Speech was as inexpressive as silence. But he had a vague consciousness of one thing, though it was not clear to him till later; that his original Tess had spiritually ceased to recognize the body before him as hers—allowing it to drift, like a corpse upon the current, in a direction dissociated from its living will.

A few instants passed, and he found that Tess was gone. His face grew colder and more shrunken as he stood concentrated on the moment, and a minute or two after, he found himself in the street, walking along he did not know *whither.

(in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* 400-1)

tonul ei căpătă iar patosul cristalin de altădată. Dar n-ai venit! Ţi-am scris, şi tot n-ai venit! El îmi tot spunea că n-o să mai vii niciodată şi c-am fost o proastă. A fost foarte bun cu mine, şi cu mama, şi cu noi toţi, după moartea.

—M-a câştigat din nou.

Clare o privi cu ochi pătrunzători, apoi, pricepând ce vrea să spună, se simţi deodată vlăguit de puteri, ca un om lovit de ciumă, şi plecă ochii în jos. Privirea îi căzu pe mâinile ei, altădată trandafirii, acum albe şi delicate.

Tess urmă:

—E sus. Îl urăsc acum pentru că m-a minţit... mi-a spus că n-o să te mai întorci... şi totuşi eşti aici. Cu hainele astea... el m-a îmbrăcat. Mi-a fost totuna ce-a făcut cu mine. Pleacă, pleacă, Angel. Te rog, pleacă şi nu te mai întoarce niciodată!

—Rămaseră aşa împietriţi, într-o tristeţe posomorită şi jalnică; în ochi li se oglindeau inimile sfâşiate de batjocura amară a soartei. Păreau că se roagă să fie ocrotiţi împotriva realităţii.

—Ah, e vina mea, zise Clare.

Dar nu putu să mai spună nimic. Vorba era tot atât de inexpresivă ca şi tăcerea. Înţelegea însă vag un lucru, pa care abia mai târziu avea să-l priceapă pe deplin: spiritul lui Tess cea de altădată se detaşase de trupul ei pe care îl lăsa cu nepăsare să alunece, ca un leş dus de-o apă, fără ca voinţa ei să

se poată împotrivi.

Se mai scurseră câteva clipe şi deodată Angel îşi dădu seama că Tess dispăruse. Fața i se împietri şi i se crispă şi mai tare...

[Traducere de Catina Ralea și Eugenia Cîncea, Editura Univers, București, 1982]

Stonehenge

*Tess and Angel Clare are finally reunited but Tess has murdered Alec d'Urberville and the police are on her tracks to arrest her. She and Angel are trying to find a shelter for the night – they arrive at the megalithic monument of *Stonehenge, traditionally associated with the place where the ancient Britons offered sacrifices to their gods. Tess has also to offer herself as a sacrifice – afterwards she will be arrested, tried and condemned to death by hanging.*

Impressive in the passage is the grandeur of the setting, its crushing presence looming over Tess and Angel, the heavy nature symbolism which foreshadows the characters' fate and the author's remarkable descriptive skills in his depiction of the dark landscape felt through its sounds and delineated against the oncoming light of the dawn.

They had proceeded thus *gropingly two or three miles further when on a sudden Clare became conscious of some vast *erection close in his front, rising *sheer from the grass. They had almost struck themselves against it.

'What monstrous place is this?' said Angel.

'It *hums,' said she. '*Hearken!'

He listened. The wind playing upon the edifice, produced a booming tune, like the note of some gigantic one-string harp. No other sound came from it, and lifting his hand and advancing a step or two, Clare felt the vertical surface of the structure. It seemed to be of solid stone, without joining or moulding. Carrying his fingers onward he found that what he had come in contact with was a colossal rectangular pillar; by stretching out

Tot bâjbâind aşa, mai merseră vreo două, trei mile, când, deodată, Clare zări drept în fața lui un fel de monument înalt care părea că răsare din iarbă. Erau cât pe-aci să se izbească de el.

—Ce-i cu locul ăsta îngrozitor?

—Bâzâie, spuse Tess. Ia ascultă!

Angel ciuli urechea. Vântul care bătea pe deasupra acestui edificiu făcea să se audă un fel de zbârnâit, ca sunetul unei harfe uriaşe cu o singură coardă. Ăsta era însă singurul sunet care se desluşea aşa că, ridicând mâna şi înaintând vreo doi paşi, Clare pipăi suprafața verticală a zidului. Părea să fie făcut din piatră masivă, fără nici un fel de legături de mortar, şi fără ornamente. Plimbându-şi degetele pe suprafața de piatră, îşi

his left hand he could feel a similar one adjoining. At an infinite height overhead something made the black sky blacker, which had the semblance of a vast *architrave uniting the pillars horizontally. They carefully entered beneath and between; the surfaces echoed their soft rustle; but they seemed to be still out of doors. The place was roofless. Tess drew her breath fearfully, and Angel, perplexed, said—

'What can it be?'

Feeling sideways they encountered another towerlike pillar, square and *uncompromising as the first; beyond it another and another. The place was all doors and pillars, some connected above by continuous architraves.

'A very Temple of the Winds,' he said.

The next pillar was isolated; others composed a *trilithon; others were *prostrate, their flanks forming a *causeway wide enough for a carriage; and it was soon obvious that they made up a forest of *monoliths grouped upon the grassy *expanse of the plain. The couple advanced further into this pavilion of the night till they stood in its midst.

'It is Stonehenge!' said Clare.

'The heathen temple, you mean?'

'Yes. Older than the centuries; older than the d'Urbervilles! Well, what shall we do, darling? We may find shelter further on.' […]

dădu seama că se aflau lingă un stâlp gigantic, de formă pătrată; întinse mâna stângă şi dădu de un alt stâlp, aidoma cu primul. Deasupra capetele lor, la o oarecare înălțime, se afla ceva care făcea cerul să pară şi mai întunecat şi care semăna cu o imensă arhitravă întinsă între stâlpi. Intrară cu grijă dedesubt, trecând printre stâlpii de piatră care făceau să răsune ecoul fâşâitului slab al paşilor. Şi totuşi li se părea că sunt încă afară, deoarece clădirea n-avea acoperiş. Tess, speriată, nu îndrăznea nici să răsufle, iar Angel întrebă, uimit:

—Ce-o mai fi şi asta ?

Pipăind într-o parte, dădură de alt stâlp, care, ca şi primul, avea aspectul unui turn pătrat, masiv şi neornamentat, iar dincolo de el mai găsiră şi alții. Toată construcția era alcătuită din bolți şi stâlpi, dintre care unii erau legați pe deasupra de arhitrave neîntrerupte.

—Un adevărat templu al vânturilor, spuse Angel.

Stâlpul următor era izolat, unii formau un triliton, iar alții erau căzuți la pământ; laturile lor erau atât de late, încât uşor ai fi putut trece cu trăsura peste ele. După un timp îşi dădură seama că toți aceşti stâlpi formau o pădure de monoliți, aşezați în grupuri pe câmpia acoperită de iarbă. Cei doi înaintară de-a lungul acestui pavilion al nopții, până ajunseră în mijlocul lui.

—E Stonehenge! spuse Clare.

'I don't want to go any further, Angel,' she said stretching out her hand for his. 'Can't we *bide here?'

'I fear not. This spot is visible for miles by day, although it does not seem so now.'

'One of my mother's people was a shepherd *hereabouts, now I think of it. And you used to say at Talbothays that I was a heathen. So now I am at home.'

He knelt down beside her outstretched form, and put her lips upon hers.

'Sleepy are you, dear? I think you are lying on an altar.'

'I like very much to be here,' she murmured. 'It is so solemn and lonely—after my great happiness—with nothing but the sky above my face. […]'

She ceased and he fell into thought. In the far north-east sky he could see between the pillars a level *streak of light. The uniform concavity of black cloud was lifting *bodily like the lid of a pot, letting in at the earth's edge the coming day, against which the towering monoliths and trilithons began to be blackly defined.

'Did they sacrifice to God here?' asked she.

'No,' said he.

'Who to?'

'I believe to the sun. That lofty stone set away by itself is in the direction of the sun, which will presently rise behind it.'

—Adică templul acela păgân?

—Da. E mai bătrân decât veacurile, mai vechi decât neamul d'Urberville! Ei, şi-acum ce facem, draga mea? Să încercăm să găsim un adăpost mai încolo.

Dar Tess, care era frântă de oboseală, se întinse pe o lespede lunguiață adăpostită de un stâlp. Piatra fusese toată ziua bătută de soare şi acum era caldă şi uscată; contrastul cu iarba aspră şi umedă din jur, care-i udase fusta şi pantofii, era plăcut.

—Angel, eu nu mă mai mişc de aici, spuse Tess întinzând mâna după el. Oare nu putem să poposim aici?

—Nu cred. Ziua, locul ăsta se vede de departe, cu toate că n-ai crede.

—Mi-amintesc că aveam o rudă dinspre partea mamei care păştea oile pe aici. Ții minte că la Talbothays spuneai mereu că sunt păgână? Asta înseamnă că aici sunt la mine acasă.

Angel îngenunche lângă trupul ei întins pe lespede şi-şi lipi buzele de buzele ei.

—Ți-e somn, draga mea? Cred că ai nimerit pe un altar.

—Îmi place foarte mult aici, şopti ea. Locul ăsta e atât de solemn şi de singuratic... după o fericire atât de mare... să n-am decât cerul deasupra capului. Parcă am fi singuri pe lume. Ce bine ar fi să nu mai existe nimeni pe lume... în afară de Liza-Lu.

Clare se gândi că, la urma urmei, puteau să se odihnească şi aici, până se mai lumina puțin. O acoperi cu haina lui şi se

'This reminds me, dear,' she said. ' […] Tell me now, Angel, do you think we shall meet again after we are dead? I want to know.'

He kissed her to avoid a reply at such a time.

'Oh, Angel—I fear that means no!' said she, with a suppressed sob. 'And I wanted so to see you again—so much, so much! What—not even you and I, Angel, who love each other so well?'

[…] He did not answer; and they were again silent. In a minute or two her breathing became more regular, her clasp of his hand relaxed, and she fell asleep. The band of silver paleness along the east horizon made even the distant parts of the Great Plain appear dark and near; and the whole enormous landscape bore the impress of reserve, taciturnity, and hesitation which is usual just before day. The eastward pillars and their architraves stood up blackly against the light and the great flame-shaped Sun-stone beyond them; and the Stone of Sacrifice midway. Presently the night wind died out, and the quivering little pools in the cup-like hollows of the stones lay still. At the same time something seemed to move on the verge of the *dip eastward—a mere dot. It was the head of a man approaching them from the hollow behind the Sun-stone. Clare wished they had gone onward, but in the circumstances decided to remain quiet. The figure came straight towards the circle of pillars in which they

aşeză lângă ea.

—Angel, dacă mi se întâmplă ceva, ai grijă de Liza-Lu! Vrei să faci asta pentru mine? îl întrebă Tess, după ce stătură o vreme în tăcere, ascultând şuieratul vântului printre stâlpii de piatră.

—Sigur că da.

—E atât de bună, de curată şi de nevinovată. Ah, Angel, dacă mă pierzi pe mine—şi o să mă pierzi curând—aş vrea s-o iei de nevastă. Ar fi foarte bine!

—Dacă te pierd pe tine, pierd totul! Şi pe urmă, ea mi-e cumnată.

—Asta n-ar fi nimic, scumpul meu. La Marlott se întâmplă foarte des ca oamenii să se însoare cu cumnatele lor. Şi Liza-Lu e atât de gingaşă şi de dulce, şi s-a făcut atât de frumoasă! Ah, aş fi gata să te împart cu ea pe lumea cealaltă! Angel, dacă i-ai da poveţe şi ai învăţa-o şi ai creşte-o pentru tine!... Are toate calităţile mele, fără cusururile mele… şi dacă ar fi a ta, ar fi ca şi cum moartea nu ne-ar fi despărţit... Ei, ţi-am spus ce-am avut de spus. N-o să mai pomenesc de asta niciodată.

Tess tăcu şi Angel căzu pe gânduri. În colţul dinspre miazănoapte, al cerului, printre stâlpii de piatră, se zărea o fâşie dreaptă de lumină. Bolta de nori negri părea un copac pus peste o oală, care, ridicându-se, lăsa să pătrundă pe la margine zorile, în a căror lumină monoliţii şi trilitonii întunecaţi se desluşeau din ce în ce mai limpede.

were.

He heard something behind him, the brush of feet. Turning, he saw over the prostrate column another figure; then before he was aware, another was at hand on the right, under a trilithon, and another on the left. The dawn shone full on the front of the man westward, and Clare could discern from this that he was tall, and walked as if trained. They all closed in with evident purpose. Her story then was true! Springing to his feet, he looked around for a weapon, loose stone, means of escape, anything. By this time the nearest man was upon him.

'It is no use, sir,' he said. 'There are sixteen of us on the Plain, and the whole country is reared,'

'Let her finish her sleep!' he implored in a whisper of the men as they gathered round.

When they saw where she lay, which they had not done till then, they showed no objection, and stood watching her, as still as the pillar around. He went to the stone and bent over her, holding one poor little hand; her breathing was now quick and small, like that of a lesser creature than a woman. All waited in the growing light, their faces and hands as if they were silvered, the remainder of their figures dark, the stones glistening green-gray, the Plain still a mass of shade. Soon the light was strong, and a ray shone upon her unconscious form, peering under her eyelids and waking her.

—Aici se aduceau jertfe lui Dumnezeu? întrebă Tess.

—Nu, răspunse Angel.

—Dar atunci cui?

—Cred că soarelui. Piatra aceea mare care e mai departe decât celelalte e aşezată spre răsărit, şi ai să vezi cum soarele o să se înalţe din spatele ei.

—Asta-mi aminteşte de ceva, dragul meu, spuse ea. Ţi-aduci aminte că, înainte de a ne căsători, nu te-amestecai niciodată în credinţa mea? Dar, cu toate astea, eu ştiam ce gândeşti şi gândeam la fel ca tine, nu pentru că aş fi avut vreun motiv, ci numai pentru că îmi plăcea să gândesc ca tine. Ia spune-mi, Angel, crezi c-o să ne mai întâlnim după moarte? Tare aş vrea să ştiu.

Ca să ocolească răspunsul, nepotrivit într-un asemenea moment, Angel o sărută.

—Vai, Angel! Asta înseamnă că n-o să ne mai întâlnim! spuse ea înăbuşindu-şi suspinele. Şi cât de mult aş fi vrut să te mai văd... Ah, cât de mult! Cum... nici măcar noi doi, Angel, care ne iubim atât de mult?

Angel era copleşit; nu se simţea în stare să răspundă unei întrebări atât de hotărâtoare, într-un moment atât de hotărâtor; şi tăcerea se aşternu din nou. După câteva clipe, răsuflarea lui Tess se făcu mai regulată, iar strânsoarea mâinii ei slăbi; adormise. Dunga de lumină palidă, argintie, care

'What is it, Angel?' she said starting up. 'Have they come for me?'

'Yes, dearest,' he said. 'They have come.'

'It is as it should be,' she murmured. 'Angel, I am almost glad—yes glad! This happiness could not have lasted. It was too much. I have had enough; and now I shall not live for you to despise me!'

She stood up, shook herself, and went forward, neither of the men having moved.

'I am ready,' she said quietly.

(in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* 415-8)

apăruse la răsărit, făcea să pară şi mai aproape capătul întunecat al întinderii Great Plain. Toată această privelişte nețărmurită purta pecetea acelei clipe de reținere, tăcere şi şovăială care se naşte înainte de ivirea zorilor. Stâlpii dinspre răsărit, cu arhitravele lor, marea piatră a soarelui în formă de flacără, care se înălța mai încolo, ca şi piatra jertfelor, din mijloc, îşi profilau siluetele întunecate pe fondul de lumină. Curând, vântul nopții se potoli şi ochiurile tremurătoare de apă din scobiturile în formă de căni ale pietrelor se linişţiră. Tocmai atunci, Angel văzu ceva mişcându-se la capătul pantei dinspre răsărit... ceva mic, cât un punct. Era capul unui om, care se apropia, ieşind din adâncitura ce se afla în spatele pietrei soarelui. Atunci Clare se gândi că ar fi fost mai bine să fi pornit mai departe în loc să se oprească aici, dar în împrejurările de față se hotărî totuşi să rămână pe loc. Silueta înainta drept spre cercul de stâlpi, în mijlocul căruia stăteau ei.

I se păru apoi că aude ceva în spatele lui... un zgomot de paşi. Întoarse capul şi, privind pe deasupra coloanelor culcate la pământ, mai văzu un om; o clipă mai târziu, se ivi un altul, mai spre dreapta, sub un triliton, şi încă unul la stânga. Lumina zorilor cădea drept pe silueta omului care se apropia dinspre apus şi Clare văzu că e înalt şi că umbla de parcă ar fi căpătat o instrucție specială. Toți veneau către ei cu scopul vădit de a-i încercui. Povestea lui Tess era deci

adevărată! Clare sări în picioare şi se uită în jur să vadă dacă poate găsi ceva, o armă, o piatră, un mijloc de scăpare. Dar nu avu timp să mai facă nimic; unul din oameni era lângă el.

—Degeaba vă mai frământaţi, domnule, spuse omul. Suntem şaisprezece, răspândiţi prin câmpie; tot ţinutul e pe urmele dumneavoastră.

—Lăsaţi-o să-şi sfârşească somnul, îi rugă Angel în şoaptă pe oamenii care se strânseseră în jurul lui.

Văzând-o pe Tess—căci abia acum dădu cu ochii de ea—nu se împotriviră; rămaseră acolo în picioare, păzind-o, muţi ca stâlpii din jur. Clare se duse către lespedea pe care era culcată Tess şi, aplecându-se, îi cuprinse mâna mică; răsuflarea îi era scurtă şi agitată, ca a unui copil. Oamenii aşteptau, în timp ce soarele se ridica treptat pe cer; feţele şi mâinile lor păreau înmuiate în argint, în timp ce trupurile le erau încă în întuneric. Pietrele aveau o lucire cenuşie-verzuie, dar câmpia rămăsese un tărâm al umbrelor. Curând, lumina se făcu mai puternică, şi o rază tremură pe chipul adormit al lui Tess, pătrunzându-i printre gene şi trezind-o.

—Ce-i, Angel? spuse ea, sărind în sus. Au venit să mă ia?

—Da, scumpa mea, îi răspunse el. Au venit.

—Aşa şi trebuia să se întâmple, şopti ea. Angel, aproape că mă bucur că-i aşa… da, da, mă bucur! Fericirea asta nu putea să ţină mult. Prea era mare. Am gustat destul din ea… Acum

ştiu că n-am să apuc ziua când o să-ți fie silă de mine!

Tess se ridică, se scutură puțin şi o porni înainte, fără ca nici unul dintre oameni să se fi mişcat din loc.

—Sunt gata! spuse ea liniştită.

[Traducere de Catina Ralea și Eugenia Cîncea, Editura Univers, București, 1982]

From *Jude the Obscure*

Jude the Obscure (1895) is a novel about the conflict between spirit and flesh and the relation between instinct and reason, simplicity and civilisation, nature and artifice. This struggle is personified by the two main characters, Jude Fawley and Sue Bridehead. Jude and Sue are two heroes condemned to live within their petty, limited world and will never be able to go beyond their individual condition and frustrations.

Jude Fawley is a principled but hypersensitive and 'soft-minded' (Allen 256) man whose personality oscillates between a sensuous temperament and intellectual aspirations. He has to decide painfully between the spirit—his studies to become a stonemason and then a priest, and the flesh—represented by Arabella Donn, 'a mere female animal'. Sue Bridehead is an intelligent school-teacher, an 'intellectualized' (Allen 257) but curiously frigid person. Her constant refusal to marry Jude, in spite of the children they have together, will place their relationship outside the moral standards of society and will result in social condemnation and rejection. The final consequence of their behaviour will be that their children will perish by a tragic fate, Jude will take to drink and will die miserably.

At First I Did Not Love You

The extract below is one last conversation that Jude and Sue have before their separation about love, marriage and their relationship. Their problem as a couple is that they decided not to live as legal wife and husband in a time and society that was not to accept such behaviour and automatically placed it outside the socially acceptable norms. Sue's attitude of refusal to marry the father of her children made their relation ambiguous and sexually ambivalent.

He went and conducted her in. She said she wanted no supper, and went in the dark upstairs and struck a light. Turning she found that Jude had followed her, and was standing at the chamber door. She went to him, put her hand in his, and said 'Good-night.'

'But, Sue! Don't we live here?'

'You said you would do as I wished!'

'Yes. Very well!… Perhaps it was wrong of me to argue distastefully as I have done! Perhaps as we couldn't conscientiously marry at first in the old-fashioned way, we ought to have parted. Perhaps the world is not illuminated enough for such experiments as ours! Who were we, to think we could act as pioneers!'

'I am so glad you see that much, at any rate. I never deliberately meant to do as I did. I slipped into my false position through jealousy and agitation!'

'But surely through love—you loved me?'

'Yes. But I wanted to let it stop there, and go on always as mere lovers; until—

'But people in love couldn't live for ever like that!'

'Women could: men can't, because they—won't. An average woman is in this superior to an average man—that she never instigates, only responds. We ought to have lived in mental

O însoți așadar mai departe și intră în casă cu ea. Sue, care spusese că nu dorește să cineze, urcă scările pe întuneric și apoi aprinse lumina. Când întoarse capul, văzu că Jude o urmase și că stătea în ușa odăii. Se duse spre el, își puse mâna în mâna lui și-i spuse:

—Noapte bună.

—Dar, Sue! Nu-i asta casa noastră?

—Ai spus că vei face așa cum doresc eu!

—Da. Prea bine!... Poate c-a fost o greșeală din partea mea să încep o discuție atât de lipsită de gust. Poate că, de vreme ce n-am putut să ne căsătorim din capul locului așa cum scrie la carte și după moda bătrânească, ar fi trebuit să ne despărțim. Poate că lumea nu e destul de luminată pentru experiențe de felul celei încercate de noi! Cine eram noi să credem că putem face pe pionierii?

—Mă bucur că măcar de asta îți dai seama. N-am făcut cu bună știință ceea ce am făcut. Gelozia și neliniștea m-au împins pe nesimțite spre o situație falsă.

—Dar și iubirea—m-ai iubit doar?

—Da. Dar am vrut să opresc viața în loc, ca să rămânem mereu doi îndrăgostiți, până când...

—Dar doi îndrăgostiți nu pot trăi așa veșnic!

—Femeile pot; bărbații nu pot, pentru că nu vor. O femeie

communion, and no more.'

'I was the unhappy cause of the change, as I have said before!… Well, as you will!… But human nature can't help being itself.'

'Oh yes—that's just what it has to learn—self-mastery.'

'I repeat—if either were to blame it was not you but I.'

'No—it was I. Your wickedness was only the natural man's desire to possess the woman. Mine was not the reciprocal wish till envy stimulated me to oust Arabella. I had thought I ought in charity to let you approach me—that it was damnably selfish to torture you as I did my other friend. But I shouldn't have given way if you hadn't broken me down by making me fear you would go back to her… But don't let us say any more about it! Jude, will you leave me to myself now?'

'Yes… But Sue—my wife, as you are!' he burst out; 'my old reproach to you was, after all, a true one. You have never loved me as I love you—never—never! Yours is not a passionate heart—your heart does not burn in a flame! You are, upon the whole, a sort of *fay, or sprite—not a woman!'

'At first I did not love you, Jude; that I own. When I first knew you I merely wanted you to love me. I did not exactly flirt with you; but that inborn craving which undermines some women's morals almost more than unbridled passion—the craving to attract and captivate, regardless of the injury it may

mijlocie este, în privința asta, superioară unui bărbat mijlociu. Ea nu începe niciodată, răspunde doar. Ar fi trebuit să trăim într-o comunitate sufletească, atâta tot.

—Eu am fost nefericita cauză a schimbării, așa cum am spus și mai înainte! Bine, fie cum vrei tu!...Dar nu poți împiedica firea omenească să fie ceea ce este.

—Tocmai asta trebuie să învețe: stăpânirea de sine.

—Repet: dacă vreunul dintre noi trebuie învinovățit, nu ești tu aceea, ci eu.

—Ba nu, eu. Păcatul tău n-a fost decât dorința—firească la un bărbat—de a poseda femeia. Eu nu ți-am împărtășit dorința până când gelozia nu m-a asmuțit s-o detronez pe Arabella. Îmi spuneam, că, din milostenie, trebuie să te las să te apropii de mine. Că aș fi de un egoism de osândă dacă te-aș chinui cum l-am chinuit pe celălalt prieten al meu. Dar n-aș fi cedat, dacă n-aș fi fost biciuită de teama c-ai să te întorci la ea... Să nu mai vorim despre asta! Jude, acum vrei să mă lași singura?

—Da... Dar, Sue, soția mea—căci asta ești! izbucni el; până la urmă, ceea ce-ți impun eu de atâta vreme e adevărat. Niciodată nu m-ai iubit cum te iubesc eu—niciodată, niciodată! Tu n-ai o inimă pasionată, inima ta nu se mistuie în flăcări. De fapt ești un soi de zână, un duh, nu o femeie!

—La început nu te-am iubit, Jude, recunosc. Când te-am cunoscut mai întâi, nu doream decât să fiu iubită de tine. N-aș

do the man—was in me; and when I found I had caught you, I was frightened. And then—I don't know how it was—I couldn't bear to let you go—possibly to Arabella again—and so I got to love you, Jude. But you see, however fondly it ended, it began in the selfish and cruel wish to make your heart ache for me without letting mine ache for you.'

'And now you add to your cruelty by leaving me!'

'Ah—yes! The further I *flounder, the more harm I do!'

'O Sue!' said he with a sudden sense of his own danger. 'Do not do an immoral thing for moral reasons! You have been my social salvation. Stay with me for humanity's sake! You know what a weak fellow I am. My two arch-enemies you know—my weakness for womankind and my impulse to strong liquor. Don't abandon me to them, Sue, to save your own soul only! They have been kept entirely at a distance since you became my guardian-angel! Since I have had you I have been able to go into any temptations of the sort, without risk. Isn't my safety worth a little sacrifice of dogmatic principle? I am in terror lest, if you leave me, it will be with me another case of the pig that was washed turning back to his *wallowing in the *mire!'

Sue burst out weeping. 'Oh, but you must not, Jude! You won't! I'll pray for you night and day!'

'Well—never mind; don't grieve,' said Jude generously. 'I did suffer, God knows, about you at that time; and now I suffer

putea să spun că eram cochetă, dar dorința aceea înnăscută care macină viața morală a unora dintre femei aproape mai mult chiar decât patima neînfrânată—dorința de a atrage și a captiva fără a ține seama de răul pe care-l poate face bărbatului—era și în mine; și când mi-am dat seama că te prinsesem, m-am speriat. Și atunci, nu știu cum s-a făcut, nu m-a răbdat inima să te las să pleci—poate înapoi la Arabella—și uite-așa am ajuns să te iubesc, Jude. Dar, vezi, oricât de duios a sfârșit dragostea asta, ea s-a născut tot din dorința egoistă și crudă de a face inima ta să sufere pentru mine fără ca a mea să sufere pentru tine.

—Și acum sporești cruzimea părăsindu-mă!

—Da, sigur! Cu cât mă zbat mai mult, cu atât fac mai mult rău! Sunt îngrozit ca nu cumva, dacă tu mă părăsești, să se întâmple cu mine cum s-a întâmplat cu porcul care a fost spălat și care s-a întors apoi la mocirla unde obișnuia să se tăvălească.

Sue izbucni în plâns.

—Dar nu trebuie să faci asta, Jude! N-ai s-o faci! O să mă rog zi și noapte pentru tine!

—Lasă, nu te sinchisi; nu-ți face inimă rea, spuse Jude cu mărinimie. Numai Dumnezeu știe cât am suferit pe vremea aceea din pricina ta; și acum sufăr din nou. Dar poate că nu atât de mult ca tine. Dacă stai și judeci, până la urmă tot femeia e mai năpăstuită!

—Așa și este.

again. But perhaps not so much as you. The woman mostly gets the worst of it in the long run!'

'She does.'

'Unless she is absolutely worthless and contemptible. And this one is not that, anyhow!'

Sue drew a nervous breath or two. 'She is—I fear!… Now Jude—good-night,—please!'

'I mustn't stay?—Not just once more? As it has been so many times—O Sue, my wife, why not!'

'No—no—not wife!… I am in your hands, Jude—don't tempt me back now I have advanced so far!'

'Very well. I do your bidding. I owe that to you, darling, in penance for how I overruled it at the first time. My God, how selfish I was! Perhaps—perhaps I spoilt one of the highest and purest loves that ever existed between man and woman!… Then let the veil of our temple be rent in two from this hour!'

He went to the bed, removed one of the pair of pillows thereon, and flung it to the floor.

Sue looked at him, and bending over the bed-rail wept silently. 'You don't see that it is a matter of conscience with me, and not of dislike to you!' she brokenly murmured. 'Dislike to you! But I can't say any more—it breaks my heart—it will be undoing all I have begun! Jude—good-night!'

'Good-night,' he said, and turned to go.

—Dacă nu cumva e o femeie de nimic, o lepădătură. Și de data asta nu este!

Sue trase cu nervozitate o dată sau de două ori aer în piept.

—Mă tem că este... Și acum, Jude, noapte bună, te rog!

—N-am voie să rămân? Măcar încă o dată? Cum am făcut de atâtea ori—vai Sue, soția mea, de ce nu se poate?

—Nu, nu, nu sunt soția ta... Ma aflu în mâinile tale, Jude. Nu mă ispiti să mă întorc înapoi, acum, că am ajuns atât de departe!

—Prea bine. Fac ce-mi poruncești. Îți datorez asta, draga mea, drept ispășire pentru felul cum te-am constrâns prima dată. Doamne, ce egoist am fost! Poate... poate c-am nimicit una dintre iubirile cele mai înălțătoare și mai curate din câte s-au înfiripat vreodată între un bărbat și o femeie!... Fie, să rupem din clipa aceasta în două vălul templului nostru!

Se duse spre pat, scoase una dintre cele două perne și o azvârli pe podea.

Sue îl urmărea cu privirea și plângea pe-nfundate, aplecată deasupra marginii patului.

—Nu-ți dai seama că la mine e vorba de o problemă de conștiință, și nu de un dezgust față de tine, murmură ea cu glas întretăiat. Nu de silă față de tine! Dar nu mai pot să vorbesc. Mi se frânge inima și stric tot ce-am început. Noapte bună, Jude!

—Noapte buna! spuse el, dând să plece.

—Dar ai să mă săruți! Spuse ea ridicându-se. Nu pot să

'Oh but you shall kiss me!' said she, starting up. 'I can't—bear—!'

He clasped her, and kissed her weeping face as he had scarcely ever done before, and they remained in silence till she said, 'Good-bye, good-bye!' And then gently pressing him away she got free, trying to *mitigate the sadness by saying: 'We'll be dear friends just the same, Jude, won't we? And we'll see each other sometimes—yes!—and forget all this, and try to be as we were long ago?'

Jude did not permit himself to speak, but turned and descended the stairs.

(in *Jude the Obscure* 421-4)

îndur...

El o strânse în brațe și sărută fața ei înclinată cum poate n-o mai sărutase niciodată. Rămaseră apoi tăcuți, până când ea șopti:

—Cu bine, cu bine! Pe urmă se desprinse împingându-l ușor și adăugă, încercând să-i îndulcească tristețea: O să rămânem totuși prieteni, Jude, Nu-i așa? Și o să ne vedem din când în când. Cu siguranță! Și-o să uităm de toate astea și-o să încercăm să fim iarăși cum am fost pe vremuri?

Jude nu-și îngădui să răspundă nimic, ci se întoarse și coborî scările.

[Traducere de Vera Călin, Editura pentru Literatură Universală, București, 1965]

Walter (Horatio) Pater

(1839-1894)



Walter (Horation) Pater was born in 1839 in the little town of Shadwell near London and was educated at King's School, Canterbury, and at Queen's College, Oxford, where he studied Greek philosophy under Benjamin Jowett. He then settled in Oxford and read with private pupils. In 1864 he was elected to a fellowship at Brasenose College. His early intention to enter the church gave way at this time to a consuming interest in classical studies.

He began to write for the reviews, and his essays on Leonardo da Vinci, Sandro Botticelli, Pico della Mirandola, Michelangelo, and others were collected in 1873 as *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (later called simply *The Renaissance*). His delicate, fastidious style and sensitive appreciation of Renaissance art in these essays made his reputation as a scholar and an aesthete, and he became the centre of a small group of admirers in Oxford. Although the whole book is important, the concluding essay (commonly referred to as the 'Conclusion') is the most significant section of it. Pater's view is, as found in Sampson (682), that for humans whose existence is transient, the greatest wisdom is to love art for its own sake. Furthermore, he asserted that art exists for the sake of its beauty alone, and that it acknowledges neither moral standards nor Utilitarian functions in its reason for being—as commonly demanded by Victorian norms. His expressed *Hedonism shook all contemporary conventions as it included not only the voluptuousness of life but also the pleasure and emotion that come from knowledge. The impact of Pater's views on his contemporaries was tremendous, but, unfortunately, as he himself soon found out, his ideas were vulgarised and placed in the wrong context—in the case of Wilde they generated an exaggerated dandyism in clothes and behaviour—which led to exacerbation of the senses and sexual perversions. This made him—when *The Renaissance* was published again in 1877—drop the famous concluding part.

Marius the Epicurean (1885) is his most substantial work written to amend the dangerously misleading 'Conclusion' to *The Renaissance*. It is a philosophical romance in which Pater's ideal of an aesthetic and religious life is scrupulously and elaborately set forth.

Imaginary Portraits (1887) are shorter pieces of philosophical fiction in the same mode. *Appreciations* (1889) is a return to the critical essay, this time largely on English subjects. In 1893 came *Plato and Platonism,* giving an extremely literary view of Plato and neglecting the logical and dialectical side of his philosophy. Pater's *Greek Studies* (1895), *Miscellaneous Studies* (1895), and *Essays from The Guardian* (1896; 1901) were published posthumously just like his unfinished romance, *Gaston de Latour* (1896).

Pater's basic article of faith was that the aim of the aesthetic function was to discover and investigate each particular instance of beauty which he considers 'the active principle' that has to exist in the mind of each artist (Chew and Altick 1478). His main interest was the innate qualities of works of art, in contrast to the prevailing tendency to evaluate them on the basis of their moral and educational value. His style is remarkable, though often not easy to penetrate, because of the fastidiousness of his constructions, his verbal virtuosity and the musical reverberation of sentences (Chew and Altick 1479).

Pater's early influence was confined to a small circle in Oxford, but he came to have a widespread effect on the next literary generation. Oscar Wilde, the philosopher George Moore, and the aesthetes of the 1890s were among his followers and show obvious and continual traces both of his style and of his ideas.

From the Conclusion to the *Study of the Renaissance*

In the 'Conclusion' he states the spirit of the aesthetic critic and sets his direction towards Cyrenaicism, the philosophy which—based on the old Greek creed that pleasure was the highest good—advocated enjoyment of the tangible or corporeal present moment situated 'between two hypothetical eternities'. This implies that, in order to maintain the ecstasy of life, each moment lived in the present has to be filled with intense experience, its fleeting presence has to be expanded by associating it with as many pulsations as possible

This is what the aesthetic critic should concentrate on: to locate each beautiful object and search in it the highest moment that it may offer.

[…] Every moment some form grows perfect in form and face; some tone on the hill or the sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or insight or intellectual excitement is irresistibly real and attractive for us—for that moment only. Not the fruit of experience but experience itself, is the need. A counted number of pulses only is given to us of a variegated dramatic life. How may we see in them all that is to be seen in them by the first senses? How shall we pass most swiftly from point to point, and be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in the purest energy?

To burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life. In a sense it might even be said that our failure is to form habits: for, after all, habit is relative to a stereotyped world, and meantime it is only the roughness of the eye that makes any two persons, things, situations, seem alike. While all melts under our feet, we may well grasp at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange colours, and curious odours, or work with the artist's hands or the face of one's friend. Not to discriminate every moment some passionate attitude in those about us, and in the very brilliancy of their gift some tragic dividing of forces on their ways, is, on this short day of frost and sun, to sleep before evening. With this sense of the splendour of our existence and of its awful brevity, gathering all we are into one desperate effort too see and touch, we shall

hardly have time to make theories about the things we see and touch. What we have to do is to be forever curiously testing new opinions and courting new impressions, never acquiescing in a facile orthodoxy of *Comte, or of *Hegel, or of our own. Philosophical theories or ideas, as points of view, instruments of criticism, may help us to gather up what might otherwise pass unregarded by us. 'Philosophy is the microscope of thought.' The theory or idea or system which requires of us the sacrifice of any part of this experience, in consideration of some interest into which we cannot enter, or some abstract theory we have not identified with ourselves, or of what is only conventional, has no real claim upon us.

[…] As Victor Hugo says: we are all under sentence of death but with a sort of indefinite *reprieve […]: we have an interval, and then our place knows us no more. Some spend this interval in *listlessness, some in high passions, the wisest, at least among 'the children of this world', in art and song. For our chance lies in expanding that interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time. Great passions may give us this quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love, the various forms of enthusiastic activity, disinterested or otherwise, which come naturally to many of us. Only be sure it is passion—that it does yield you this fruit of a quickened multiplied consciousness. Of such wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own sake, has most. For art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake.

(in *Longman Anthology* 1783-4)

Gerard Manley Hopkins

(1844-1889)



Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889) was born on 28 July in Stafford, Essex into an Anglican family of nine children. While a student at Balliol College, Oxford, he continued writing poetry while reading classics. While studying there he was received into the Roman Catholic Church by John Henry (later Cardinal) Newman. The following year, he left Oxford with a very distinguished academic record, decided to become a priest. He entered the Jesuit novitiate in 1868 and burned his youthful verses, determining 'to write no more, as not belonging to my profession.'

In 1874 Hopkins went to Wales to study theology. There he learned Welsh, and, under the impact of the language itself as well as that of the poetry and encouraged by his superior, he began to write poetry again. Moved by the death of five Franciscan nuns in a shipwreck in 1875, he broke his seven-year silence to write the long poem 'The Wreck of the Deutschland', in which he succeeded in realizing 'the echo of a new rhythm' that had long been haunting his ear. It was rejected, however, by the Jesuit magazine *The Month*. He also wrote a series of sonnets strikingly original in their richness of language and use of rhythm, including the remarkable 'The Windhover', one of the most frequently analysed poems in the language. He continued to write poetry, but it was read only in manuscript by his friends and fellow poets.

Officially Hopkins was ordained to become a cleric in 1877. He served as missionary, occasional preacher, and parish priest in various Jesuit churches and institutions in London, Oxford, Liverpool, and Glasgow and taught classics at Stonyhurst College, Lancashire. He was appointed professor of Greek literature at University College, Dublin, in 1884. But Hopkins was not happy in Ireland; he found the environment unfriendly, and he was overworked and in poor health. From 1885 he wrote another series of sonnets known today as the 'terrible sonnets' which reveal strong tensions between his delight in the sensuous world and his urge to express it and his equally powerful sense of religious vocation.

While in Dublin, Hopkins developed another of his talents, musical composition; the little he composed shows the same daring originality as does his poetry. His skill in drawing, too, allowed him to illustrate his journal with meticulously observed details of flowers, trees, and waves.

His friends, especially Robert Bridges, continually urged him to publish his poems, but Hopkins resisted; all that was printed in his lifetime were some immature verses and original Latin poems, in which he took particular pleasure.

Hopkins died of typhoid fever and was buried in the Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin. Among his unfinished works was a commentary on the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuit order.

After Hopkins's death, Robert Bridges began to publish a few his most mature poems in anthologies, hoping to prepare the way for wider acceptance of his style. By 1918, Bridges, then Poet Laureate, judged the time opportune for the first collected edition. It was issued but did not sell well. Not until 1930—when a second edition was issued—and thereafter was Hopkins's work recognized as among the most original, powerful, and influential literary accomplishments of his century; it had a marked influence on such leading twentieth century poets as T. S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas, W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, and C. Day Lewis.

In the case of traditional Victorian poetry meaning and imagery have a constant movement of expansion towards the reader. Contrary to this, Hopkins gives his imagery an inward movement, away from the reader, back towards the poem where it has a cumulative effect. Here, gradually, a total structure of meaning is being produced which will then 'explode' with immense force of meaning in a final semantic revelation, perceived as an epiphany which allows the readers to apprehend the full meaning of the text (Macsiniuc 157) until them hidden from him.

In order to achieve this goal Hopkins uses deliberately obscure language, which makes his poems seem difficult at first to understand. This deliberate obscurity of verses is the result of his exploitation of the verbal subtleties and music of English, of the use of echo, alliteration and repetition, of obsolete or colloquial words and a highly compressed, distorted or truncated syntax in which everything that was perceived as superfluous was removed. Hopkins severely disciplined his poetic diction (Macsiniuc 159) and used specific words—archaic, obsolete but also colloquial or regional, gave older words new meanings by using them in unusual contexts, experimented with word combinations and returned dead metaphors to their original meaning.

Extremely important for Hopkins is the meaning and truth which lies at the core of everything, its inner structure or organisation, that which gives each thing its individuality or distinctiveness. This is what he called 'inscape' (a term he coined after the word 'landscape'). This inscape is the true reality; this is what gives personality to a poem.

The force, the dynamic energy that gives the inscape coherence but which also ensures that meaning is duly projected towards the reader when the right moment has come is what Hopkins calls 'instress'.

Hopkins was the initiator of a rhythm which he named 'sprung rhythm', a direct result of the discovery of accentual verse in

old Anglo-Saxon poetry. In traditional metre each foot may consist of one stressed syllable and a fixed number of unstressed ones whereas in sprung rhythm one foot consists of a stressed syllable and any number of unstressed syllables. In this way, sprung rhythm is made to imitate normal speech.

Hopkins's poetry is highly religious, marked in an obsessive way by the Catholic dogma whose central figure, Jesus Christ, becomes a pivotal element in very many of his poems. But for him supreme was not only God but also the Word—God's word but also his own as a poet. In his hands the Word is raw material with protean qualities, with which he can do what he pleases to give substance to his creative energy.

From 'The Wreck of the Deutschland'

'The Wreck of the Deutschland' is a personal as well as a religious poem, where for the first time Hopkins made use of the sprung rhythm the stressed syllables of which he marked with accents. It was written under the impression of the tragic death of five Franciscan nuns in a terrible sea-storm while crossing to England to escape religious persecutions in Germany.

The first part of the poem is more personal and reflects the poet's experience in connection with the shipwreck and the distress that afflicts the poet's and the human soul after such a catastrophe and the awareness that this is an act of God, (Macsiniuc 156), one of the trials which He inflicts on humans to show his power to master man. He is the Creator who confers meaning to life but also to death.

Dec. 6, 7 1875
to the happy memory of the five Franciscan nuns
*exiles by the *Falck Laws drowned between*
midnight and morning of December 7.

PART THE FIRST

1

Thou mastering me
God! Giver of breath and bread;
World's strand, *sway of the sea;
Lord of the living and dead;
Thou hast bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh,
And after it almost unmade, what with dread,

Thy doing: and dost thou touch me afresh?
Over again I feel thy finger and find thée.
2
I did say yes
O at lightning and lashed rod;
Thou heardst me truer than tongue confess
Thy terror, O Christ, O God;
Thou knowest the walls, altar and hour and night:
The swoon of a heart that the sweep and the hurl of thee trod
Hard down with a horror of height:
And the *midriff *astrain with leaning of, laced with fire of
stress.
3
The frown of his face
Before me, the hurtle of hell
Behind, where, where was a, where was a place?
I whirled out wings that spell
And fled with a fling of the heart to the heart of the Host.
My heart, but you were dovewinged, I can tell,
*Carrier-wited, I am bold to boast,
To flash from the flame to the flame then, tower from
the grace to the grace.
4
I am soft sift

In an hourglass—at the wall
Fast, but mined with a motion, a drift,
And it crowds and it combs to the fall;
I steady as a water in a well, to a poise, to a pane,
But roped with, always, all the way down from the tall
Fells or flanked of the *voel, a vein
Of the gospel *proffer, a pressure, a principle, Christ's gift.

5

I kiss my hand
To the stars, lovely-asunder
Starlight, *wafting him out of it; and
Glory, glory in thunder;
Kiss my hand to the *dappled-with-*damson west:
Since, tho' he is under the world's splendour and wonder,
His mystery must be instressed, stressed;
For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand.

(in *Selected Poetry* 98-99)

'The Starlight Night'

The basic idea of the poem 'The Starlight Night' is that of perceiving and appropriating Christ and Virgin Mary situated at the centre of the holy pantheon of Christian saints. But, as usual with Hopkins, its underlying meaning is obscured by verbal accumulations and has to be worked out with effort and pain. Nevertheless, once it has been perceived, the poem's embedded message is straightforwardly moralising and religious.

This message is revealed at the end of the poem—all the luminescent congregations, the insistence on the colour white and the apparently senseless constructions in the first part of the poem are representations of Christ and his mother and his saints, illuminated and cherished in protective enclosures.

Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!
    O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air!
    The bright borough, the circle-citadels there!
Down in dim woods the diamond *delves! the elves'-eyes!
The grey lawns cold where gold, where *quickgold lies!
    Wind-beat *whitebeam! airy *abeles set on a *flare!
    Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard scare!—
Ah well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize.
Buy! then! bid then!—What?—Prayer, patience, alms, *vows.
Look, look: a May-mess, like on orchard boughs!
    Look! March-bloom, like on *mealed-with-yellow *sallows!
These are indeed the barn; withindoors house

The *shocks. This piece-bright *paling shuts the spouse
Christ home, Christ and his mother and all his *hallows.

(in *Selected Poetry* 114-5)

‘The Windhover‘

This sonnet, charged with elaborate imagery and textual construction, is formally dedicated to Christ, our Lord. It is constructed on the image of God, soaring over us. The pivotal image of the poem is the windhover, associated with terms of dignity and nobility and contemplated with awe and perceived as an emblem of all glorious things, of which the greatest is Jesus Christ. The windhover flies high up in the sky to God, it is closer to God than any of us and it takes us to God. The first line ‘to Jesus Christ our Lord’ is thus more than a mere dedication—it is the essence, the direction and the final goal of our existence, as shown by the dominant windhover.

To Christ Our Lord

I caught this morning morning’s *minion, king-
    dom of daylight’s *dauphin, *dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
    Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he *rung upon the rein of a *wimpling wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
    As a skate’s heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the *hurl and gliding
    *Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird,—the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!
Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
    *Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion

Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!
No wonder of it: shéer *plód makes plough down *sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, *gall themselves, and *gash gold-*vermilion.

(in *Selected Poetry* 117)

‘The Lantern out of Doors‘

The idea insinuated in this poem is that once in a while we are interested in people but soon they are lost in the darkness of life, having death as its last station. Death brings about forgetfulness and practically nothing is left of these beings. But, as usual with Hopkins, the sonnet ends on religious reverberations suggested by the presence of Christ. Death is not total annihilation, because of Jesus Christ: He is the light—the Lantern out of Doors—He is the point of our interest, He is the one who counts when nothing is left. Ultimately, He is everything that minds, our first and last friend.

As in many of his poems, here Hopkins marked the accented syllables of sprung rhythm.

Sometimes a lantern moves along the night,
That interests our eyes. And who goes there?
I think; where from and bound, I wonder, where,
With, all down darkness wide, his *wading light?

Men go by me whom either beauty bright
In mould or mind or what else makes rare:
They rain against our much-thick and marsh air
Rich beams, till death or distance buys them quite.

Death or distance soon consumes them: wind
What most I may eye after, be in at the end
I cannot, and out of sight is out of mind.

Christ minds; Christ's interests, what to avow or amend
There, éyes them, heart wánts, care háunts, foot fóllows kínd,
Their ránsom, théir rescue, ánd first, fást, last friénd.

(in *Selected Poetry* 119)

‘Carrion Comfort‘

‘Carrion Comfort’ is one of the ‘Terrible Sonnets’ that Hopkins wrote while he was in Dublin in a mood of despondency bordering on despair caused by personal frustrations and professional dissatisfactions, assailed by existential questions about faith, the condition of man and his relation to God.

The poem takes up again Hamlet’s dilemma of existence vs. non-existence when facing despair. As Jenkins warns (152), according to Roman Catholicism despair is a mortal sin as it implies loss of belief that God is present to offer comfort, help and the salvation of the soul. One solution to despair is suicide (‘carrion comfort’) even more damnable than despair itself. In both cases—existence in despair and non-existence in suicide—at the end of the road there is a terrible God with His punishment. The resolution, stated at the beginning of the poem, not to accept despair but face existence and not lose hope is examined quite timorously at the beginning of the poem when the temptation to feast on despair arises and God is offered as an alternative to wrestle with.

Just like the God in ‘The Wreck of the Deutschland’ the God as perceived in this sonnet is intransigent and no less terrible and the hope that is offered is quite questionable. In this poem, as Watson believes (114), God’s exploration is carried out in a negative way, with darkness, torment and pain as necessary purgatorial stages on the way to arrive at God.

Not, I’ll not, *carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee;
Not untwist—slack they may be—these last strands of man
In me ór, most weary, cry *I can no more*. I can;
Can something, hope, wish day come, not choose not to be.
But ah, but O thou terrible, why wouldst thou rude on me
Thy wring-world right foot rock? lay a lionlimb against me? scan
With darksome devouring eyes my bruisèd bones? and fan,

O in turns of tempest, me heaped there; me frantic to avoid thee
and flee?
Why? That my *chaff might fly; my grain lie, sheer and clear.
Nay in all that toil, that coil, since (seems) I kissed the rod,
Hand rather, my heart lo! Lapped strength, stole joy, would laugh, chéer.
Cheer whom tough? The hero whose heaven-handling flung me,
fóot tród
Me? or me that fought him? O which one? Is it each one? That night,
that year
Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!) my God.

(in *Selected Poetry* 153)

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8), Hardy (5:701-2), Hopkins (6:53-4), Pater (9:195), Pre-Raphaelitism (9:670), Rossetti D. (10:192-4), Ruskin (10:247-9), Swinburne (11:446-7), Tennyson (11:635-6), Thackeray (11:666-8).
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Glossary and notes

Abbé Sicard: the head of a school for the deaf and dumb in Paris.
abele: white poplar.
abide: (outdated) live, dwell.
abide by: comply with, remain true to something.
abode: the place where someone lives.
abreast: side by side, facing the same direction.
accursed: lying under a course.
Aegaean or Aegean Sea: arm of the Mediterranean Sea situated between Greece and Turkey.
afar: at a great distance.
affright: sudden terror.
afield: away from home, abroad.
ain't: isn't.
ait: small island in a river.
albeit: even though.
Alexandrians: school of philosophy, literature and science in ancient Alexandria.
ambling pad: horse moving leisurely.
anathema: something that someone vehemently dislikes.
angel-brood: group of angels.

anigh: near.
apace: quickly.
architrave: block of stone resting on columns.
Arians: heretics who denied the doctrine of the Trinity by claiming that Christ was not one substance with the Father but that he was a man made the Son of God by the Father.
art: are (2nd. sg.).
arter: after.
arterward(s): afterward(s).
as: that.
aspen: kind of poplar tree with small rounded leaves with long stalks.
aspersion: calumny.
assuaged: with less suffering.
asunder: apart from each other.
astrain: (about a part of the body) exerted or stretched to the maximum.
attire: clothes, especially formal ones.
aught: anything whatever.
auricular: related to the ear or hearing.
Avalon: in Celtic mythology, a paradise island situated in the western seas.
Avilion: see Avalon.
avowed: declare with assurance.
awe: feeling of great respect mixed with fear.
aye: always.
babble: rapid, fooling talk.
baffle: perplex.

bale: large bundle of goods.

bar: straight and long piece of wood or metal; submerged bank of sand along a shore or a river, often obstructing navigation.

Barbary corsairs: corsairs who came from the Barbary Coast, the Mediterranean coast of Africa, and were notorious for their fierceness and debauchery.

barge: flat-bottomed boat used to transport goods between ships and the shore.

barge: type of boat with flat bottom, with or without sails used to transport freight on rivers or canals.

Bastille: the French prison, symbol of oppression. Its destruction marked the start of the French Revolution of 1789.

bawl: cry out loud.

bawl: shout or weep noisily.

beacon: signal fire placed on a pole, tower or hill.

Bedlam: lunatic asylum. The name comes from 'bethlem', after the hospital St Mary of Bethlehem in London.

Beelzebub: another name for the Devil or Satan.

begone!: go away at once!

begotten (past participle of beget): procreated, produced.

behoof: advantage, profit.

Belial: a demon identified in the Christian tradition with the devil or Satan.

beseech: implore.

bestow: grant an honour, right or gift.

bide: remain, to stay.

billow: great wave.

billowing: rising and rolling like in a great wave

blighted: affected by blight (a plant disease caused by fungi).

blinkers: leather flaps used to prevent a horse from seeing sideways.

bodily: with the whole body.

booby: awkward foolish person.
booty: valuable stolen goods; rich gain.
botheration: being bothered.
boundless: without end of limit.
bounty: generosity.
bourne: boundary, limit; destination, goal.
bowery hollow: shaded leafy valley.
bowery: having tree boughs and vines twisted together.
boxwood: the hard wood of the box plant (a type of shrub or tree).
brace (oneself): prepare oneself for something difficult or unpleasant.
bramble: shrub of the rose family.
brazen: like brass or made of brass; shamelessly bold.
breach: violation (of a law).
break horses (in), train horses to carry a rider, pull a cart, etc.
breaker: large wave with a white top.
brine: very salty water.
brink: shore, edge.
brittle: fragile, breaking easily; insecure.
brook[1]: small river.
brook[2]: tolerate, allow.
brookside: by the side of a brook (i.e. small river).
buckle: connect with a buckle; join closely.
bullace: cultivated variety of plum.
bungler: mistake; failure.

buoyant: able to float; happy and confident.
burnish: polish.
by design: on purpose.
caboose: kitchen on a ship's deck.
calico: white or unbleached cotton cloth.
call smb. names: use insulting words.
camel-hair: Saint John's clothes were made of camel hair.
Camelot: the legendary town where King Arthur's palace and court were situated, probably at Winchester (in the south of England), according to Th. Malory.
caper: prickly shrub with greenish buds and berries.
Capet Veto: the former king, Louis XVI.
carouse: drink and enjoy oneself in a lively and noisy way.
carrier-witted: with the instinct to return home like that of a carrier pigeon.
carrion: decaying flesh of dead animals.
cask: container that looks like a barrel, used to hold liquid.
cast o' my office: sample of my work.
Catalani, Angelique: a famous primadonna of the age.
causeway: raised road or path across wet ground or water.
causey: see causeway.
chaff: husks of grain or other seed.
chalice: the wine cup used in the Christian Eucharist.
champaign: plain.
chancel: part of a church near the altar used by the clergy and other officials.
changeth: changes (3rd. sg.).

chap: jaw; lower front part of the face.
chiel: child.
choicer comparative of choice: of high quality; selected with care.
chuckle: inward or quiet laugh.
churl: impolite and mean-spirited person.
clammy: damp and sticky.
clamour: utter or proclaim something noisily.
clasp: devise used to hold objects (e.g. clothes or a necklace) together.
Claus of Innsbruck: an imaginary sculptor.
cleave: divide, pass through.
clematis: climbing plant with white, pink or purple flowers.
clog: shoe or sandal with a wooden sole.
clomb: climbed.
clothes-press: oak cupboard.
clutch: hand grip.
coaxing: persuasion.
cockles in hot cockles: a Christmas game in which a blindfolded player knelt down who, after being struck, had to guess who gave the blow.
collier-brig: ship carrying coal.
comply: do as one is requested.
Comte, Auguste: French mathematician and philosopher of the nineteenth century, founder of positivism (i.e. a theory that sustains that experimental investigation and observation—and not religion or metaphysics—are the only sources of knowledge).
conjecture: guess, based on the appearance of a situation and not on proof.
contrivance: an ingenious device or scheme.

convolvulus: invasive plant with trumpet-shaped flowers and triangular leaves.
coo: make a low soft sound or cry like that of a dove or pigeon.
copse or coppice: thicket or grove of small trees.
Corsican: Napoleon (who was born in the isle of Corsica).
cote: for domestic animals.
countenance: a person's face showing his / her character, mood, feelings.
cow-parsley: tall plant of the carrot family with tiny white flowers and leaves like those of the parsley.
cozen: trick; deceive.
crabapple or crab-apple: small wild sour apple.
crane: stretch one's neck to see better.
craven: coward.
crimson: deep red in colour.
crop: graze on grass.
cruse: earthenware pot or jar.
cud: food brought up to the mouth of a ruminating animal from its first stomach to be chewed again.
cumber: clutter; burden (smb.).
cur: mongrel dog; unfriendly person.
curate: assistant to parish priest.
dale: valley.
dam: Caliban's mother ('dame')
damson: small purple-black fruit that looks like a plum, usually cultivated.
dank: unpleasantly moist or wet.
dapple: mark with spots.
daresay or dare say (I): it is probable that, implying that smth. might be true.

darkling plain: dark piece of land.
darnut: (reg.) dare not.
dauphin: the eldest son of the king of France, usually heir to the throne.
dazed: stunned or bewildered; unable to think clearly, especially because of a shock, accident.
dazed: stunned or bewildered; unable to think clearly, especially because of a shock, accident.
dearth: inadequate supply, scarcity of something.
decamp: depart quickly, secretly.
decamp: go away secretly or suddenly.
deem: consider or judge something in a particular way.
delve (plural of delf): mines, pits.
delve: search in detail for something; dig.
deputation: the person or persons commissioned by another person, party, or public body to act in his or its behalf; delegation.
dereliction: delinquency; negligence.
desultory: lacking purpose or enthusiasm.
devotee: fanatically religious person.
dimpled: marked with dimples (i.e. small hollows in the cheek or in another part of the human body).
dip[1]: hollow, depression.
dip[2]: sink, drop or slope downwards.
dire: warning of disaster.
disallowed: refused.
doleful: sorrowful.
dolt: silly or stupid person.
dolt: stupid person
dower: a widow's share of the family goods; dowry.

down[1]: the soft fine feathers of a bird.
down[2]: gently rolling hill.
down[3]: region without much vegetation situated on high ground.
dragonfly: bright coloured insect with wings.
draught: current of air.
drear or dreary: dull, bleak and depressing; causing feelings of gloom
drive off: defeat, to chase away.
drivel: talk nonsense like a child or a stupid person.
droop: hang downwards.
drudge: work hard, in a monotonous way.
durst: dared.
dye: give something a different colour using a substance.
Earl of Southampton or Henry Wriothesley: according to some scholars, he was the patron and friend described in Shakespeare's sonnets.
ebb and flow: the two opposing movements of the tide towards and from the sea, respectively.
ebb: grow less; become slowly weak(er) or faint(er).
eddy: circular movement of water causing a small whirlpool.
eel: kind of fish that looks like a snake.
ejaculate: utter something suddenly and vehemently.
Elba: the island of Napoleon's exile from which he escaped and forced at Waterloo one last attempt to recover his lost empire.
Elders: officials of the early Christian Church; people with authority by virtue of age and experience.
elf-things: animals looking like lizards.
endearment: love or affection.
endeavour: try to do smth.

engirdle: enclose with a girdle (belt or cord).
ensconce: settle (oneself) securely or snugly; cover or shelter; hide securely.
entice: persuade by offering pleasure.
entreaty: act of asking someone earnestly, of requesting something urgently; plea.
environ: circle, surround.
ere long: soon.
ere: before.
erection: building.
escarpment: steep slope that separates an area of high ground from an area of lower ground.
exculpatory: declaring to be not guilty of smth.
exhortation: earnest request; urging.
expanse: surface.
extricate: release.
eye-tooth or eyetooth: canine tooth on the upper jaw.
fain: pleased or willing.
Falck (Falk) Laws or May Laws: laws against Catholics issued in the 1870s under the responsibility of Adalbert Falk, the Minister of Culture in the Prussian government of Otto von Bismark.
fane: temple.
farrier: blacksmith who shoes horses; a person who treats diseases or injures of horses.
favour: present, gift.
fay: fairy.
fender: frame bordering the fireplace to keep in falling coals.
fickle: changeable, unsteady.
fiery: burning like fire.

Fiesole: town in central Italy near Florence.
file: tool with (a) sharp surface(s) used for smoothing or sharpening a hard material.
fitful: occurring intermittently, irregularly.
five-and-forty: forty-five.
flag: become tired or less enthusiastic; become weaker or less dynamic.
flare: unsteady glare; sudden blaze; signalling light.
fleet: quick, swift.
flint: hard quartz.
flounce: move in an exaggeratedly impatient or angry manner.
flounder[1]: be confused; hesitate.
flounder[2]: stagger clumsily in mud or water.
flute: speak or sing in a melodious way.
fluting: producing a sound like that of a flute.
fluty: like the sound of a flute, light and clear.
fold: enclosure for livestock, esp. sheep.
folding: putting sheep in an enclosure.
foot (verb): travel on foot, walk.
forbore (past tense of forbear): abstained, refrained from.
forego or forgo: abstain from doing or having something enjoyable.
forenoon: the hours of daylight before midday); morning.
forsake: abandon, give up.
forsooth: indeed, actually, truly.
Frà Pandolf: an imaginary painter.
fretful: full of agitation.

frill: narrow piece of cloth with many small folds.
furled: folded or rolled around something.
furmity or frumenty: drink made of wheat boiled in milk and flavoured with spices.
furze: yellow-flowered shrub with leaves having the form of spines.
gable: upper end of a house wall where it joins a sloping roof and makes a shape like a triangle.
Galatians: In the chapter 'Galatians' (5.15-23) St Paul speaks about the desires of the flesh as set against the desires of the Spirit. In this context he mentions the 'works of the flesh', among which: fornication, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, jealousy, anger, selfishness, envy, murder, drunkenness. These may constitute twenty-nine instances of damnation. The one who did not interpret the text of the Galatians according to the dogma, could be accused of heresy and this could also entail damnation, which the speaker hopes to happen to Brother Lawrence in case he failed in his analysis.
galingale: plant with rough-edged leaves and aromatic root.
gall: cause feelings of irritation; vex.
gall: swelling of the plant tissue due to fungi, insects or parasites and used for tanning.
gash: injure with a deep long cut.
gaunt: lean; thin; skinny.
gibbet: wooden frame with an arm used to hang the bodies of executed criminals.
gibe: make scornful remarks.
gimcrack: cheap and showy ornament.
Giotto di Bondone: Florentine painter of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries whose works marked the transition of Italian art from Medieval to Renaissance. He broke away with the stiff linear tradition of the Byzantine painting and adopted a more naturalistic style characteristic of the pre—Renaissance period. The painters of the Renaissance period (14th to the 16th century) laid more emphasis on the real human presence in the arts and on realistic representations of the human body based on the Classical tradition of ancient Greece and Rome.
gird: get ready for something difficult.

girt: past of gird (encircle with a belt).
gleam: reflect light.
gnash: strike or grind the teeth together.
gnawing: biting.
goad[1]: a thing that stimulates someone into action.
goad[2]: incite, to rouse.
goblinish: looking like a goblin (a mischievous, ugly dwarf).
Goofy: a cartoon character created by Walt Disney, in the shape of a dog, not very intelligent, clumsy and often foolish.
gourd: fruit like the melon or the pumpkin.
graminivorous: animal feeding on grass.
grasp: seize or hold firmly.
grate: the metal bars and frame that hold the wood, coal etc in a fireplace.
grated: ground.
grating roar: annoying, extremely harsh or loud noise.
graze: touch lightly in passing; scratch something.
greengage: edible green plum-like fruit of the greengage tree (a cultivated variety of plum tree).
Greenwich pensioners: pensioners at the Royal Navy Hospital at Greenwich.
grinder: molar tooth.
gropingly: feeling and searching with the hands like a blind person.
guimp or gimp: twisted, reinforced silk, wool or other cord, sometimes stiffened with wire, for garments, curtains.
gunwale: the upper edge of the side of a boat.
half-flush: less red, almost pink colour of skin.
hallow: saint.
hard-wrung: very strong, very serious.

harken or hearken: listen.

harrowing: extremely disturbing or distressing; painful; heartbreaking.

hast: have (2nd. sg.).

hath: has (2nd. sg.).

haul: drag or pull something with effort.

hawthorn: shrub with spines, white or pink flowers and small red fruit.

hay-trusser: person who ties, binds, or fastens hay.

headlong: impetuous.

hearken or harken: listen.

hearten: make somebody feel cheerful and encouraged, cheer up.

heart-stricken: overwhelmed with grief, disappointment or remorse.

heave: pull, lift.

hedgerow: line of bushes growing along the edge of a field or road.

Hedonism: doctrine that the sole or supreme ideal in life is personal pleasure; pursuit of personal (and sensual) pleasure).

Hegel, Georg: German idealistic philosopher of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the father of dialectic according to which the contradiction between a proposition (thesis) and its antithesis is resolved at a higher level of truth (synthesis).

hem: border or bottom edge of clothes turned back and stitched down.

hereabout(s): around here.

herseemed: it seemed to her.

hieratic: very dignified or majestic.

hirig-out: employment for wages.

hither: to or towards this place; nearer.

hoard: amass and hide or store away.

hoary: having grey hair; aged.

hob: flat top part of a cooker.
hobble: walk along unsteadily or with difficulty.
hollow-cheeked: with sunken cheeks (hollow: curved inwards).
honey-suckle: climbing shrub with fragrant yellow and pink flowers.
Hooker, Richard: theologian of the sixteenth century.
hooting: sounding of the horn or whistle especially of a vehicle.
hover: keep itself in one place in the air; hang in the air.
hue: shade of colour.
hull: main frame or body of a boat or ship.
hum: make a low, steady, continuous sound like that of a bee; sing with closed lips.
hurdle: sledge used for dragging traitors to their execution.
hurl: act of throwing something somewhere.
husk: outer covering of a seed or fruit.
hustle: push roughly.
Hy, zy, hine: the beginning of a black-magical invocation of the Devil.
Hyades: constellation near the Pleiades whose rising was believed to bring rain.
idle: ineffective; worthless.
ignorant armies: armies which cannot distinguish friend from enemy.
imbower: encircle or enclose her within a leafy shelter.
impish: mischievous.
in abeyance: temporary suspended or not being used at present.
in the stead of: in the place of someone, as a substitute.
incarnadine: give a red or pinkish colour.
incur: become subject to smth., usually unpleasant as a result of one's actions.

indenture: (here) official document.

Indian Empire: refers to British India and the Indian states, an important territorial possession of the British Crown during the Victorian age.

insensate: without sense, understanding, or judgment; foolish.

intimation: hint.

irk: make someone irritated or angry.

irksome: annoying, irritating.

island home: the Isle of Ithaca, the home of the sailors.

iste perfecit opus: (Latin) 'This man made the work.'

jangle: make a noise like metal hitting metal.

jasmine: shrub or climbing plant with fragrant, often, yellow flowers.

jaunt: short journey, esp. one taken for pleasure.

jilt: reject; cast aside.

Job: Jewish patriarch who did not lose his faith in God in spite of the afflictions sent by God to test him.

jobber: wholesaler, broke-dealer.

juncture: particular point in time.

junket: pleasure trip or outing.

kindle: light a flame; set on fire.

kingcup or marsh marigold: marsh plant with large bright yellow flowers.

kirk: (reg.) church.

kirtle: man's tunic or coat.

kirtles: skirts.

knave: unprincipled, untrustworthy, or dishonest person.

kyind: kind.

labour: (here) advance with difficulty.

laburnum: shrub or small tree with yellow flowers and whose seeds are poisonous.

lap: wrap protectively, cover.

late: deceased.

lattice: structure or pattern with square or diamond shaped spaces left between.

latticed pane: small piece of glass set in a diagonally crossing strips of lead.

lawn: fine woven linen or cotton.

ledge: narrow horizontal surface projecting from a wall.

lees: dregs.

linden: lime tree.

listlessly: lacking energy and enthusiasm and unwilling to do anything needing effort.

listlessness: apathy, indifference, lethargy.

lo: look!, see!

Locke, John: English philosopher of the seventeenth century.

looseness: behaviour free from restraint.

lot: person's destiny, luck or condition in life.

Luddite Movement: the movement of the textile workers who were opposed to mechanization, as they believed that using labour-saving machines will cause unemployment. The result was several organized machine breaking episodes which took place between 1811-1816.

lug: drag, pull or carry something with effort.

lull: calm down.

lurid: shocking.

lustreful: full of glow, of light.

lyre: musical instrument with strings, similar to the harp.

main: physical force.

Manichees: heretics who believed in the existence of a radical dualism between light and darkness or goddess and evil.

mantle: cover the surface of something.

mark: accepted standard.

mast: tall pole on which the sails of a ship are hung.

match'd: compared.

matting: material used for mats.

mayest: may (2nd. sg.).

mayhap: perhaps.

mealed: covered with seeds; spotted.

meek: patient and without resentment; long-suffering.

meek-eyed: with eyes that express suufering.

meekly: timidly; submissively.

meekness: obedience, humbleness.

meetly: in a proper, correct way.

Megalosaurus: very large, carnivorous dinosaur of pre-historic times.

mêlée or melee: disorderly mass.

mere: (small) lake.

mete and dole: distribute.

mid / 'mid or amid: in the middle of.

midge: small fly living near water.

midriff: the middle part of the body, between the chest and the waist.

millinery: woman's hats.

minikin: small, delicate or affected person or thing.

minion: attendant, servant; darling.
minster: church of a monastery.
Miranda: character in Shakespeare's play The Tempest.
mire: soft ground filled with water, swampy ground, marsh.
mirth: amusement.
miry: very muddy.
missis or missus: somebody's wife.
mitigate: make less severe, serious or painful.
mole[1]: dark-coloured spot, mark or lump on the human body.
mole[2]: small mammal that lives under the ground.
Moloch: in the Bible, the god of the Canaanites and Phoenicians to whom first-born children were sacrificed.
monolith: block of stone in the form of a column or obelisk.
mood: feeling induced by the reading of a literary work.
moon-blanch'd: made white under the light of the moon.
morass: area of soft wet ground in which it is easy to get stuck.
morn: morning.
mossy: from moss: primitive plants with small leafy stems.
mould: loose earth, upper soil of cultivated land rich in organic matter.
moulder: decay slowly.
mullion: vertical bar between the panes of glass in a window.
multitudinous: composed of a multitude of individuals.
munificence: generosity.
musingly: as if absorbed in thought.
myrrh: aromatic substance, resin used in perfumes, medicine and incense.

myrtle: bushy shrub with shiny leaves and white or rosy flowers.

napery: household linen, especially table linen.

nay: not merely this but even; no.

neath / 'neath: beneath.

nestle: settle oneself comfortably.

nick: alteration of 'niche'; (arch.) prison.

nigh: near in place or time.

nightingale or Philomela: in Greek mythology, a beautiful Athenian princess who, after being raped by her brother-in-law, Tereus, a Thracian king at the time, had her tongue cut out by him to stop her from revealing his deed. In revenge, her sister, Procne, killed her own son, Itylus, and fed him to her husband, Tereus. The two sisters had to run away when Tereus became aware of the whole thing and, in order to escape him, they implored the gods' help—Philomela was subsequently turned into a nightingale and Procne into a swallow.

nipper: claw of a crab.

nobod: nobody.

Nonjurant Priest: priest who had refused to swear allegiance to the new church constitution established by the National Assembly in 1791.

nook: corner or recess offering seclusion or security.

noose: loop with a knot that tightens as the rope is pulled; (fig.) vulnerable position.

number: group of individuals.

oar: piece of wood used to make a boat move through water.

Odin: in Norse mythology, the All-Father, the god of poetry and the dead.

officious: willing to help in an exaggerated way.

ogle: look at smb. amorously, flirtatiously, or impertinently.

Old Nick: the Devil.

on a sudden: suddenly.
on the sly: secretly.
ope: archaic form of 'open'.
orb: sphere, globe.
Orcus or Pluto: the Roman god of the Underworld.
orris-root: iris-root, a root used to make perfume.
osier: willow with wigs used to make furniture.
ottoman: low cushioned seat without a back or arms.
oust: take the place of somebody.
overscored: of a bigger size.
over-tasked: exposed to too many tasks.
paddock: piece of ground in which horses are kept.
paling: kind of fence.
pane: one of the divisions of a window; plate of glass used for such a division.
pant: gasp for breath.
Paracelsus: alchemist, astrologer and physician of the sixteenth century who vainly hoped to find the secret of life
parched: dry.
parsonage: the house that the church provides for its parson (i.e. a Protestant clergyman).
partake: take or have a part or share along with others; participate.
partake of: be characterized by.
Pascal, Blaise: French philosopher and mathematician of the seventeenth century.
pecooliar: peculiar.
pent up: confined or held in check.
perch: settle or rest on something high.

peremptorily: in a manner expecting to be obeyed immediately and without questioning.

peremptoriness: authority, dominance.

peremptory: authoritative, decisive, domineering.

perforce: necessarily.

perfunctory: carried out with a minimum of effort or reflection.

pincer: the front claw of a crab.

pinnacle: an architectural monument, a small pointed tower on top of a building.

pitcher: pupils.

plash[1]: splash.

plash[2]: with puddles or shallow pools.

platter: large oval plate usually used to serve meat; meal that consists of a variety of foods served on one plate.

Playhouse: the Globe Theatre in London.

Plena gratia, ave Virgo!: 'Full of grace, hail, Virgin!'. The enraged speaker twists the words of the prayer, whose correct wording is: 'Ave, Maria, gratia plena!'

plethoric: in full quantity.

plod[1]: slow walk.

plod[2]: walk slowly especially in a way that is boring.

plume: a brightly coloured bird's feather.

poach: steal.

pollard: a tree whose top branches have been cut off to encourage new growth.

pompion: pumpkin.

preternatural: more than is usual or natural.

prime: of first importance; very important; very impressive.

privet: shrub with small white flowers and poisonous black berries.

profess: declare, confess.
proffer: offer for acceptance.
Prosper or Prospero: character in Shakespeare's play The Tempest.
prostrate: in a horizontal position.
protrusion: something that sticks out from a surface.
puff: small cloud, usually of smoke emitted in one puff.
pungently: incisively, sharply, expressively.
purblind: without discernment or understanding.
quack: charlatan.
qualm: momentary feeling of sickness or faintness; sinking of heart.
quaver: speak or sing in a trembling voice.
quell: overcome; alleviate (ease) something.
quench: bring to an end; put out, extinguish (a fire).
quickgold: word coined by Hopkins after quicksilver.
quiver: case for carrying arrows.
raiment: clothing, dressing.
ramble: walk taken for pleasure in the countryside.
rampart: defensive wall of a castle or walled city, part of wall used as a fortification; protective barrier.
ratel: African or Asian carnivorous mammal that looks like a badger.
ravenous: fiercely, eager for food; rapacious, voracious.
rear: raise something in an upright position.
rebuff: reject or refuse something violently.
reckless: careless; rough, wild.
rectorship: post of a Church of England rector (i.e. a clergyman in charge of a parish).

recumbent: lying down.
reeling: stagger, lurch or sway, as from drunkenness.
refection: dinner, especially in a convent.
reflect: think.
Reform Bills: series of bills passed by Parliament (1832, 1867, 1884) providing for an increase and redistribution in the number of voters in elections for the House of Commons.
reft (past tense and past participle of reave): plundered or robbed or seized from someone.
relent: become less severe or harsh, less intense or violent.
reprieve: delaying.
rheumy: person with eyes or nose full of watery fluid.
ridge: long area of high land, especially at the top of a mountain.
riding: any of the three administrative divisions into which Yorkshire, England, is divided, namely, North Riding, East Riding, and West Riding.
rill: small river.
robe: cover the clothes with a robe or with something that looks like a robe.
rough-hewn: uneducated, unrefined.
rueful: regretful.
ruffle: shake the feathers.
rung (outdated past tense of ring): beating of wings; ring on the rein is a term used in riding schools and refers to a horse that circles at the end of its trainer's long rein (or line).
rush: marsh plant with hollow leaves.
Ruysdael also Ruisdael: Dutch landscape painter of the seventeenth century.
sage: very wise person with sound judgement.
Saint Ambrose: bishop of Milan who conferred power to the early Christian Church.

Saint John: St John the Baptist, considered to be the protector of Florence.

Saint Theresa of Avila: reformer of the Carmelite order and one of the most important mystical writers of all times who combined religious life with practical activity.

sallow[1]: sickly yellowish colour or complexion.

sallow[2]: variety of willow tree.

Salve tibi!: Hail to thee!

samite: heavy fabric of silk, often woven with gold or silver threads.

sate: outdated past tense of sit.

save: except.

Savonarola, Girolamo: Dominican monk of the fifteenth century who gave expression to violent religious reaction against artistic licence and social corruption of the Renaissance. When he aroused the hostility of the Pope Alexander VI, he was burnt at the stake as a heretic.

scale: become similar to.

scarped: cur or eroded as that it forms a very steep bank or slope.

scintillating: sparkling, emitting sparks, twinkling.

scorn: feel or show string content for something / somebody; refuse something proudly.

scrape: awkward or embarrassing mess (situation) as a result of foolish behaviour.

scraper: tool for scraping off paint or other adherent matter.

scrofulous: morally degraded.

scud: run or fly straight and fast.

scuttle off: run away quickly.

seal'd or sealed: fossilized.

sear: burn, scorch, injure because of intense heat.

security: jewellery, insurance policies or other personal belongings that can be used to guarantee that one will pay back borrowed

money.
seedling: young plant.
seëst: see (2nd. sg.).
serge: durable woollen cloth used for making suits, trousers, etc.
serpentine: like a serpent or a snake; treacherous.
serpentining: moving like a serpent or a snake; tempting; cunning or treacherous.
settle: wooden bench with arms and a high back.
seven-and-twenty: twenty-seven.
sexton: person who looks after a church and churchyard and who also acts as a bell-ringer and gravedigger.
shallop: light open boat used for rowing in shallow water.
shallow: superficial in knowledge, thought or feeling.
shalt: shall (2nd. sg.).
shears: cutting instrument like very large scissors.
shed: cast off, let fall (leaves, hair, skin).
sheer: altogether, completely.
shingles: small rounded pebbles, covering especially the sea shore.
shock: pile of sheaves of grain or stocks set upright in the field.
shod: past tense and past participle of shoe (fit a horse with a metal shoe).
shouldst: should (2nd. sg.).
shred: cut or tear into small pieces.
shrink from smth. / doing smth: be reluctant to do smth.
shrubbery: area in a garden planted with shrubs.
sillion: the ridge between two furrows of a ploughed field.
sinecure: office or position that provides an income in exchange for little or no work.

sittest: sit (2nd. sg.).
skim: move or pass quickly or lightly over a surface.
skirt: go or pass round something so as to avoid it.
slight: insult.
slime: unpleasantly moist, soft and slippery substance.
slop: liquid carelessly spilled or splashed about; kitchen refuse.
slop-basin: basin containing such liquid.
slothful: full of sloth (laziness).
slovenly: untidy or dirty; careless.
slovenly: untidy, unclean.
sluggish: indolent; without activity or energy; slow to respond.
slumberous: full of sleep.
slunk (past tense and past participle of slink): gone away in fear or shame.
smite: hit smth. with force; attack, destroy.
soar: fly or rise high into the air.
sod: grass-covered ground.
sodden: full of water.
solacement or solace: consolation or comfort in distress.
solder: join with metal.
soot: black powdery or flaky substance produced by the incomplete burning of organic matter.
soothe: calm, to comfort.
Sophocles: Greek dramatist of the fifth century BC, author of seven tragedies.
Sordello: Italian troubadour of the thirteenth century who is also mentioned by Dante.
spake: (poetic) spoke.

Spencer, Herbert: English philosopher of the nineteenth century, supporter of the evolutionary theory in the study of society and laissez-faire doctrine.

spike: thin, pointed piece of metal or wood.

spout: send out or flow in a powerful stream.

sprout: start to grow or develop.

square: make seem reasonable.

stamp: stamping (i.e. bringing down one's foot to show anger).

staunch: very loyal and committed.

staylace: lace for fastening large rod.

stifle: prevent something from happening.

Stoics: Greek school of philosophy, believing that God determined everything for the best and that virtue is sufficient for happiness.

stolid: calm, showing little emotion.

Stonehenge: megalithic monument of pre-historic times, situated on Salisbury Plain in South England, considered to have been used for time measuring and astronomical purposes.

stoop: bend the body in humiliation, humiliate oneself.

straggler: something moving away or straying.

strait: narrow channel between two bodies of water; difficult situation.

streak: line or band; long thin mark which is easily noticed.

stubble: cut stalks of cereals left after harvest.

stuccoed: coated or decorated with stucco (cement or plaster used for ornamentation as a hard covering for exterior walls).

succumb: be forced to give way or to give in.

suffuse: spread over or through.

sullen: gloomy; melancholy, ill-humoured; silent.

sully: defile; disgrace.

sumever: no matter who.
sunder: split or break apart.
superannuated: too old to be effective or useful.
surly: bad-tempered and unfriendly.
swarthy web: dark foot (of a bird).
swarthy: of a dark colour.
sway: slow and rhythmical movement back and forth.
swell: gradual increase; slow, regular, wavelike movement of the sea.
swoop: rapid movement downwards through the air.
tabular: formal.
talon: claw (one of the sharp nails) of birds of prey.
tare: tore.
Tartarean: infernal. In Greek mythology Tartarus was the name given to the abysmal regions below Hades where the Titans were confined.
Tartuffes: hypocrites. The name comes from Tartuffe, a Molière character.
Taylor, Jeremy: Anglican bishop and theological writer of the seventeenth century.
teach: cause someone to know something; explain or show someone something.
teetotal: never drinking alcohol or opposed to the drinking of alcohol.
Temple bar: a 17th century arch in London.
thaw: unfreeze; defrost.
thee: you (2nd. sg., objective case).
thence: from there.
thine: yours (2nd. sg.).
thither: to or towards that place.

Thomas Lucy: person said to have prosecuted Shakespeare for stealing deer.
thoroughfare: public road, especially a main road.
thou: you (2nd. sg.).
threadbare: worn ragged, shabby.
thy: your (2nd. sg.).
thyself: yourself (2nd. sg.).
tier: one of a series of rows or levels placed one above and behind the other.
tinge: colour with a slight shade.
tinkle: make short ringing or clinking sounds.
tinsel: glittering metallic thin sheets, used in pieces, strips, threads, etc., to produce a sparkling effect cheaply.
toddle: move with short, unsteady steps, like a small child.
tortuous: with lot of bends, twists or turns.
toss: throw; move about in an uncontrolled way.
totter: tremble; move unsteadily.
trammel: stop from moving.
tramp: walk or tread heavily.
transgress: go beyond the limits of what is acceptable.
treadle: (outdated) step, tread.
treadmill: monotonous or wearisome routine in which there is little or no satisfactory progress.
tresses: long locks or curls of hair.
trilithon: stone structure consisting of a horizontal stone resting on two vertical ones.
trough: long, narrow open container that holds water or food for animals.
trump: playing-card ranked above the others; person of great excellence.
Tuileries: the former Paris residence of the kings and queens of France.

tureen: large dish with a lid, used for serving soup or vegetables.

Turner, Joseph (1775-1851): British painter, master of landscape painting. He is famous for the way in which he managed to create an atmosphere by means of colour and gradations of light.

turn-out: number of people attending or taking part in an event.

twain: two.

twitch: move with a sudden, jerky motion.

un: one.

unabated: full of strength or force.

uncompromising: solid; unyielding.

uncongenial: unfriendly, unpleasant.

unequal laws: laws that do not affect everyone in the same manner: some people are rewarded and some are punished.

ungirt (from girt(h)): no longer bound or fastened with a girth.

unhasp: unfasten.

unhooped: unfastened.

unkindled: not aroused or stirred up.

unparliamentary smoke refers to a parliamentary antipollution law of the time saying that all furnace had to be built in such a way as to consume the smoke coming from such furnace.

unsustained: without support.

untilled: uncultivated.

untrodden: not having been walked on.

untwine: opposite of twine (i.e. twist together).

uptore (past tense of uptear): tore up.

Uz: the Biblical land of Job.

vane or weather vane: a movable device at the top of a spire to show the direction of the wind.

vapid: offering nothing that is stimulating or challenging.
veer: change direction or position.
vermilion: bright-red pigment.
vernal: in or appropriate to spring.
vigil: act of staying awake or period when somebody stays awake.
voel: bare hill or mountain.
volley: a number of projectiles discharged at one time.
vow: voluntary promise to God or to a saint; formal promise of fidelity; earnest wish or prayer.
wade: move with effort or difficulty; walk through water.
waft: pass easily or gently through the air.
wailing: sorrowful, crying sound.
wallow: roll about or lie in mud or water.
wan: without vitality.
warn't: wasn't.
wattle: framework of poles interwoven with branches or reeds.
waylay: intercept.
wayward: self-willed and unpredictable.
wean: accustom a child to accept other food than his / her mother's milk; cause someone to get over a state of dependence.
wear and tear: strain, damage, deterioration.
weather: come safely through; survive.
web: membrane between the toes of a swimming bird or other aquatic animal.
webs: feet like those of water birds whose toes are united by a tissue or membrane.
wellnigh: almost, nearly.
wert: were (2nd. sg.).

what-d'ye-call-'em or what-do-you-call-it/her/him: phrase used to replace a forgotten name.
whereby: in accordance with which, as a result of which.
wherefore: for that / what reason, therefore; as a result of which.
whin: furze (i.e. evergreen shrub with yellow flowers).
whirl: turn round very quickly.
whitebeam: tree of the rose family, with white hairs on the undersurface of the leaves and with white flowers.
white-livered: cowardly.
whither: towards what place; to which place.
wi': with.
wielding: exercising.
will't: will it.
wimple: fall or lie in folds.
windhover: a kestrel (i.e. a falcon that hovers in the air against the wind).
winnow: remove waste matter from grain by exposing it to a current of air.
wistful: full of unfulfilled desire.
withal: together with this.
wittles: (reg.) victuals (food).
woe: great sorrow or suffering.
wold: rolling plains.
wombat: Australian marsupial mammal that looks like a bear.
woodbine: common honey-suckle (q. v.)
workhouse: institution that existed in England from the 17th to the 19th century whose aim was to provide employment for the poor and food for the infirm.
worshippest: worship (2nd. sg.).

wos: was, also used as 'were'.

wot[1]: (past tense of obsolete verb wit) knew.

wot[2]: what, also used as 'who' or 'that'.

wreath: curl or ring of smoke.

wreathe: arrange (flowers or leaves) in a circular shape; encircle.

wrench: pull or twist something violently.

wretch: contemptible person.

wring: twist or squeeze something to obtain something (usually liquid).

wrinkle: line or small fold in the skin of the face.

writhe: twist as if in pain; suffer bitterly.

wrought (archaic past participle of work): achieved, done.

wrung (past tense and past participle of wring): twist.

yaffle: green woodpecker.

ye: you (2nd. pl.).

yield: surrender, submit.

yokel: rustic; country uneducated person.

yoke-mate: (used jokingly) spouse (i.e. member of a married couple).

yonder: (situated) over there.

yourn: yours.

zooks: crude blasphemous swearword referring to God's hooks, i.e. the nails used to crucify Christ.

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